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Luther's Picture of Christ on the Basis of the Church Postil Sermons

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INTRODUCTION

It is impossible to know Luther without reading his sermons. It is impossible to understand Luther's theology without feeling the impact of his exposition of that theology in his preaching. And there is perhaps no better example of Luther's preaching than the *Church Postil* sermons. To read these sermons is to appreciate Luther as a man, as a preacher, as a theologian, as an exegete, and as a leader of men.

The compilation of the *Church Postil*, which Luther himself considered "the best of all his books," extended over several decades. Luther first undertook this work in 1520, in response to a request by Elector Frederick the Wise, who decided that Luther should desist from his polemical writings and sharp disputations with his adversaries and rather give himself over to positive, evangelical teaching, on the basis of the Gospels of the Church Year. In accepting this advice, Luther wrote to the Elector: "Your Electoral Grace has counseled well that I should turn from the quarrelsome, sharp, and entangling writings, in which I have been engaged nigh unto three years, and that I should occupy myself with the holy and kindly doctrine, and, beside the work of the interpretation of the Psalter, labor in the interpretation of the Epistles and Gospels (which is called Postil) for the benefit of the ministers and their subjects: you having been of the opinion that I, burdened with such an amount of work, would the sooner attain peace also against the attacks of my enemies."

He goes on to say: "I have written not for those that are experienced, but for the common people and those that have the Spirit, that are highly esteemed before God, as Isaiah says; I fear their opinion, no matter how coarse they speak, and especially that of Your Grace, which is disposed to the Holy Scriptures and clings to them with incomparable earnestness, and is also able to test the ability of the most learned theologian to the utmost. . . . I hope, however, that I shall do enough, if I uncover the purest and simplest sense of the Gospel as well as I can, and if I answer some of those unskillful glosses, in order that the Christian people may hear, instead of fables and dreams, the Word of their God, unadulterated by human filth. For I promise nothing except the pure, unalloyed sense of the Gospel suitable for the low, humble people. But whether I am able to accomplish this, I shall let others judge." (Lenker, 10, pp. 7, 9.)

During the period of 1520 to 1527 Luther himself wrote out his sermons and generally prepared them for the printer. From 1527 to 1535 his work was edited by Stephan Rodt and published under his supervision. From 1540 to 1544 the sermons were edited by Kaspar Kreuziger. The *Church Postil* underwent further revision after Luther's death. In this connection Grimm writes: "In reading these sermons of Luther, as we now have them, we must bear in mind that the vast majority were written out and filled in from notes taken by Luther's friends, Stephan Roth, Veit Dietrich, Andreas Poach, Kaspar Kreuziger, and others, and it is often difficult to come to a conclusion as to just what Luther really said, how he expressed himself, and in what form his sermons were originally preached.

"This is particularly true of the sermons which have been most widely read, the *Church* and *House Postilla*. Just a glance at these will show that many of them have been worked over and enlarged. The Epiphany sermon in the *Church Postilla* on the Gospels contains a hundred and thirty-six pages in Lenker's *Luther's Works*. The Gospel sermon for the Sunday after Easter, we know for certain, is composed of two sermons which the Reformer preached at Borna. On the other hand, there are several sermons in the *Church Postilla* on the Epistles, like those of the Second Sunday in Advent and of the Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity, which re-

semble sermon briefs and extracts rather than entire sermons." (*Luther as Preacher*, p. 94.)

Luther was glad to accept the assignment of the Elector with regard to the *Church Postil*, not only for his own diversion to a more pleasant and profitable task, but also to insure a greater measure of true evangelical preaching throughout Germany. His sermons were prepared for the use and guidance of the preachers of his own day, the majority of whom were unable to work out their own sermons and who often had recourse to the sermons of others, which in many cases were not truly Scriptural. Luther, therefore, realized the importance of writing an explanation of the pericopes of the Church Year for the benefit of the German clergy.

It was in this way, then, that the *Church Postil* sermons received their origin. The name "postil" means a homily or sermon, and is of medieval origin. In the public service the sermon followed immediately after the reading of the Scriptures, and the preacher customarily began his discourse by saying: "After these words of the text," etc. (*post illa verba textus*, etc.). In this way the homily came to be known as *postilla*; from this word are derived the verb *postillare* and the noun *postillatio*. The word occurs in Wycliffe's writings and in other old English literature, but is now obsolete in English.

Luther wrote very few of his sermons in full. This is not to imply, however, that he preached without preparation, for in every case he prepared a very careful and detailed outline. The majority of his sermons were taken down in dictation while Luther preached. Concerning Luther's sermonizing, Ker writes: "Of Luther's own preaching it is difficult to form a proper idea from what is left to us. We have a great mass of sermons, or lectures as we should call them; but he wrote none or very few of them; they were taken down by others and sent out without his being able even to look at them. There were what are called his *House-postils*—lectures on portions of Scripture to his family, friends, and neighbors, who filled a large room. These are like our week-evening lectures, evidently poured forth out of his fulness at the time. There were also his public discourses, in the church, at home, and wherever he went, which were delivered much in the same way, only after more careful preparation. It was his

habit, when he had chosen a text or a subject, to meditate upon it, to arrange his thoughts, jotting them down perhaps in outline with his leading illustrations, and then to throw his heart into the same. He did not see the sermon till it had been taken down and printed, and frequently he did not see it even then. Indeed, he was so occupied with the preaching of other sermons, with the duties of the church, the university, the Protestant community, and with the incessant consultation and correspondence which these involved, that when a sermon was once delivered, all thought of it was gone." (*History of Preaching*, pp. 158, 159.)

Luther is unquestionably one of the really great preachers in the history of the Church. His style is marked by a beautiful clarity of thought and simplicity of expression. He never uses a four- or five-syllable word when a one- or two-syllable word will convey the proper meaning. He has in mind always the children, the poor, the humble, and the unlearned in his audience. He himself writes: "When I preach, I regard neither doctors nor magistrates, of whom there are in this church about forty; but I have an eye to the multitude of young people, children, and servants, of whom there are more than two thousand. Will the rest hear me? The doors are open unto them: they may be gone. I see that the ambition of preachers grows and increases, and this will do the utmost mischief in the Church. . . . When they come to me, to Melancthon, to Dr. Pomer, & c., let them show how learned they be; they shall be well put to their trumps. But to sprinkle their sermons with Hebrew, Greek, and Latin savours merely of show, according with neither time nor place." (Ker, p. 162.) Again he writes: "When I was young, and especially before I was acquainted with theology, I dealt largely in allegories, and tropes, and a quantity of idle craft; but now I have let all that slip, and my best craft is to give the Scripture, with its plain meaning; for the plain meaning is learning and life." To preach clearly and simply is a great art — and of that art Luther proved himself a master.

His sermons are also marked by a remarkable thoroughness in the explanation of the sacred text. He delves into the very heart of the text and literally wrings it dry. He treats every verse exhaustively so that every portion of it will become crystal clear even to the dumbest hearer.

Luther's preaching is also marked by a pungent and graphic manner of expression. He does not mince words. He cares nothing for high-flown rhetoric or for brilliant perorations. His style is forceful and popular, so that, as Ker tells us, "his preaching gained a power which roused all Germany and shook the souls of men. There had been nothing like it since the day of Pentecost. On his way to Worms, to meet the Diet, he could not escape from the crowds. At Erfurt, where he had commenced in the refectory, the great church was so crowded that they feared it would fall. At Zwickau, the market place was thronged by 25,000 eager listeners, and Luther had to preach to them from the window." (*History of Preaching*, p. 152.)

As one commentator puts it: "Luther was a master in the art of expressing his thoughts. He is able to use short, pithy, laconic sentences, and also, when the occasion presents itself, long, involved sentences. Even in the most learned sermons he likes to use the conversational method of delivery. He seems to take his hearers into his confidence and then discusses with them the thoughts suggested by the text. He asks them questions and invites them to consider problems with him, always holding the attention and the interest of all." (*Luther as Preacher*, p. 116.)

Luther preached with great vehemence, and his words fall like the blows of a sledge hammer. He never hesitates to call a spade a spade. Yet, when occasion demanded, Luther could vary his mood and speak in the gentlest and most winsome manner, so as to captivate the smallest child.

Luther's sermons, as might be expected, abound in polemics. It might almost seem that he counted that sermon lost in which he did not take a resounding blow at the Pope and the papists. No language is too vitriolic to be applied to them. While such preaching would be unseemly in our pulpits today, we should not criticize Luther too severely for his indulgence in harsh invective. It was in keeping with the custom of the times, and he regarded the Pope as the very Antichrist and the papal system as the most vicious and soul-destroying product of the Evil One. It was his devotion to Christ and the Gospel—of which the papal system represented the very antithesis—that impelled him to speak so drastically.

But the chief and surpassing characteristic of Luther's preaching is its exaltation of Christ. All of Luther's preaching — as indeed all of his theology — is centered in Christ. He never preached a sermon in which Christ and the Gospel of His salvation were not central. This factor is fundamental in the proper understanding of Luther. He himself writes: "What, then, is the great subject of preaching? It is the glory of God in Jesus Christ. We preach always Him, the true God and Man who died for our sins and rose again for our justification. This may seem a limited and monotonous subject, likely to be soon exhausted, but we are never at the end of it."

This centrality of Christ also dominates the entire body of the *Church Postil* sermons. They are, therefore, ideally suited for a portrayal of Luther's picture of Christ. It is to the presentation of this picture, as painted by Luther in these sermons, that we shall now address ourselves:

I. THE PERSON OF CHRIST

Of fundamental importance in the Christology of Luther is his teaching concerning the person of Christ. This consists of two natures — divine and human — uniquely and supernaturally conjoined in one Person.

A. HIS DIVINE NATURE

Luther is extremely clear and emphatic in his ever-recurring assertion of the deity of Christ. Indeed, there is not a sermon in which this doctrine does not come to the fore. Luther heaps proof upon proof to show that Christ is indeed true God.

He shows, first, that the Scripture ascribes to Christ the eternal attributes of deity. He writes: "Christ was before Abraham, . . . in other words, because He was the one true God. . . . The fact that the Seed of Abraham, who gave Himself for us, is also true God, secures blessing and victory for all sinners. Therefore Christ speaks not of His human nature that they saw and experienced; for they could easily see He was not yet fifty years of age, and did not live before Abraham. But with that nature by which He existed long before the time of Abraham, by which He existed also before all creatures and before the whole world . . . as is written in

Heb. 13:8: 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever.' " (Sermon for V Sunday in Lent, XI:180 f.)* Thus also he states in his sermon for IV Sunday in Advent that Christ was "born before the world and all other things" (X:128). And ever and again he affirms that Christ was "begotten of the Father from eternity" (X:184, et al.), and that the Father knows Christ from eternity (XII:66).

Moreover, Luther ascribes to Christ the qualities of *life* and *light*, which are the attributes of deity. In his sermon for Third Christmas Day he writes: "Thus Christ has always been the Life and Light, even before His birth, from the beginning, and will ever remain so to the end. He shines at all times in all creatures, in the Holy Scriptures, through His saints, prophets, and ministers, in His word and works; and He has never ceased to shine." (X:198.) What is more, there is no light apart from Him, for he goes on to say: "There is only one Light that lighteth all men, and no man comes into the world who can possibly be illuminated by any other light" (X:205).

Luther also makes clear that Christ is worthy of the honor and glory which pertain alone to God. In the sermon for Third Christmas Day he states: "John says further: 'We beheld His Glory,' that is, His divinity through His miracles and teachings. The word 'glory' we have heard before in the Epistle, where it was said of Christ, that Christ is the 'brightness of the Father's glory,' which means His divinity. . . . This is also what the Evangelist means when he says, 'We have seen His glory,' to wit, His glorious being and deeds, which are no insignificant, common glory, but the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father." (X:221 f.)

He declares that Christ is greater and higher than the angels (XI:299), and that He has been appointed to exercise supreme and universal dominion: "In the Second Psalm, vv. 7-8, we read that God says to Christ: 'Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of Me, and I will give Thee nations for Thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possessions.' Here you see again that Christ is appointed of God a Lord over all the earth." (Sermon for Ascension Day, XII:192.) Moreover, He is Lord of

* This citation and those to follow refer to the volume and page in Lenker's Edition of *Luther's Works*.

the Church, as Luther explains in his sermon for the II Sunday after Easter: "Christ teaches us in this Gospel to look to Him alone as the true Shepherd, who only is the Founder, Lord, and Head of the Church. . . . He is the Lord of Moses and of all creatures, to whom all men should be subject." (XII: 50.)

He further identifies Christ with God by citing divine names ascribed to Jesus. In the sermon for I Sunday after Easter (XI: 411) he quotes the confession of the Apostle Thomas, in which he calls Christ "My Lord and my God!" and points out that Christ did not repudiate this confession, but confirmed it. It follows very logically, then, that Christ either is true God or else an impostor; the fact that He accepts Thomas' worship of Him as God admits of no other alternative. Elsewhere he calls Christ the "Creator" (X: 209); he declares (XII: 354) that the Son is "as great as God Himself"; he states that Mary, in bearing Jesus, actually became the mother of God (X: 138); he says that "we worship the Crucified as God and Lord" (X: 310) and that Christ "is a gracious God" (XI: 126); he argues that Christ must be God because "God bestows on Christ His own government" and "it is not possible for God to bestow His glory, government, property or people on one who is not true God, as He Himself declares: 'My glory will I not give to another,' Is. 42: 8" (Sermon for Epiphany, X: 134). Indeed, Christ and the Father are One, says Luther: "Why does He not say: 'I honor My Father, and ye dishonor Him' but says 'Ye dishonor Me'? Impliedly He proves by this that the Father's and His honor are alike and the same, as He and the Father are one God." (Sermon for V Sunday in Lent, XI: 176.)

Luther further examines the deity of Christ in the light of the fundamental Christian doctrine of the Trinity of God. In his sermon for the IV Sunday after Easter he writes: "This is truly an incisive text for the article of the three persons in the one divine Being, that the Son of God is the Word of the Father in eternity, whom no one hears speak except the Holy Spirit" (XII: 165); again, in the sermon for the Sunday after Ascension Day he states: "Christ says further: 'Whom (the Holy Spirit) I will send unto you from the Father.' For He, the Father, is the person who takes the initiative; I am the Son; and from us the Holy Spirit proceeds. And the three

persons are one, and one essence, with equal power and authority." (XII:248.) He further states: "We can have no surer foundation for our belief in the deity of Christ than that we enwrap and enclose our hearts in the statements of the Scriptures. The Scriptures gradually and beautifully lead us to Christ; first revealing Him to us as a man, then as the lord of all creatures, and finally as God. Thus we are led to the true knowledge of God. . . . Our faith in these two persons, the Father and the Son, is therefore sufficiently established and confirmed by passages from the Scriptures. . . . And in Matt. 28:19, deity is also ascribed to the Holy Spirit." (Sermon for Trinity Sunday, XII:409, ff.)

Christ's deity is further attested by the impressive series of miracles which He performed, and which can be accounted for only by acknowledging His divine power. Luther devotes a goodly portion of his *Church Postil* sermons to the exposition of these miracles, e. g., the changing of water into wine (XI:54 ff.); the cleansing of the leper and the healing of the centurion's servant (XI:70 ff.); the stilling of the tempest (XI:97 ff.); the healing of the Syrophenician woman's daughter (XI:148 ff.); the feeding of the five thousand (XI:166 ff.); the healing of the ten lepers (XIV:60 ff.); the raising of the young man of Nain (XIV:127 ff.); the healing of the palsied man (XIV:158 ff.); the healing of the nobleman's son (XIV:252 ff.); the raising of Jairus' daughter (XIV:326 ff.), and others.

Of greatest moment in establishing the deity of Christ is the interpretation of the classic passage from the first chapter of John's Gospel concerning the Word made flesh. Luther devotes his great sermon for Third Christmas Day to this theme. He shows first that Christ is the Word; that this Word is the Second Person in the Holy Trinity, and thus that He is the true and eternal God; that He was *with* God and, at the same time, *was* God, and that, as such, He made all things. He summarizes his very detailed and lucid exegesis of this difficult passage as follows: "Thus the Evangelist contends that both assertions are true: God is the Word, and the Word is with God; one nature of divine essence, and yet not one person only. Each person is God complete and entire, in the beginning and eternally." (X:183.) Again: "Behold, in the man Christ are all things. He has made all things; in Him is

life, and He is the Word by whom all things were made." (X:190.)

In the same sermon Luther drives home the importance of believing that Christ is indeed God; "He who does not believe Christ to be true God, as I have so far described Him, that He was the Word in the beginning with God and that all things were made by Him; but wishes to make Him only a creature of time, coming after His mother, as Cerinthus teaches, is eternally lost and cannot attain to eternal life; for there is no life without this Word and Son of God; in Him alone is life. The man Christ, separate from, and without God, would be useless." (X:187.)

B. HIS HUMAN NATURE

Christ, however, is not *only true God*. At a point in time He assumed the human nature and became man. Upon the fact of Christ's true humanity Luther is also very insistent. In his sermon for the Sunday after Christmas he writes, X: 306: "The human nature of Christ . . . was an instrument and temple of the Godhead. . . . Although the Spirit was in Him from the first moment of the conception, yet as His body grew and His reason naturally developed as in other men, so also was He filled and moved by the Spirit more and more. It is no delusion when Luke says that He waxed strong and advanced in wisdom, but the words tell us plainly in age and in stature, and as He grew in stature, His reason developed, and with development of His reason He became stronger in the Spirit and filled with wisdom before God, in Himself and before men."

Luther makes frequent references to the fact of Christ's humanity. He states: "Jesus was a natural man in every respect just as we, the only difference being in His relation to sin and grace, He being without a sinful nature" (X:140). Thus also he refers to the special appellations "Son of David" and "Son of Man," whereby the human nature of Christ is clearly indicated. So truly was He a man that even His mother found it hard to believe that He was the promised Messiah (X: 89 ff.). Referring to the fact that the Scriptures refer to Christ as being made in the "likeness of men," Luther writes: "These words must be understood as referring to His external being and mode of living, such as eating, drinking, sleeping, walking, resting, working . . . and all human conduct

and deportment, by which no one could recognize Him as God, had He not been so proclaimed by John in the Gospel" (Sermon for Third Christmas Day, X:221). Luther concludes: "God will not and cannot be found, save through and in His humanity, which He has set up as an ensign for the nations" (X:195).

C. THE UNION OF THE TWO NATURES

The question arises, of course, as to how Christ could be both God and man in one person. Luther agrees that this is a mystery beyond the understanding of limited human reason, but stoutly maintains that the union of the two natures is a fact that cannot be denied. According to Scripture, each of the two natures of Christ partakes of the properties of the other. Thus Luther can write, in his sermon for Trinity Sunday, X:448 f.: "But what do these words import: 'The Son of Man, who is in heaven'? How is it that He has come down from heaven and is still in heaven? . . . True, He descended into our flesh and blood and humbled Himself below all men, unto death on the Cross, as a man forsaken and accursed by God. However, He was not in the meantime separated from God, but He remained with God all the time and hence was always in heaven; He exists from eternity, ever beholding His Father and present with Him, ruling and working together with Him, coequal in power and might. These features of His omnipotence were not in any wise apparent in His humbled state, when He divested Himself of the form of God, as Paul says in Phil. 2:7, and went about in the form of a servant, enduring suffering and death, until such time as He was delivered from this state and was exalted again and sat down at the right hand of God. . . . His divinity and communion with the Father He has had from eternity and has continued in possession of them all the time, even from the moment He took upon Himself limitations of His human nature." In other words, when Christ became man, He did not cease being God; and now that He has returned to the right hand of God, He does not cease being man. The two natures are united in His person and will remain so through eternity.

Luther states this fact very clearly on numerous occasions. He asserts: "Although Christ died as man, yet He

ever remained alive; for life could not and cannot die" (X:194). Further: "Christ (as) true man is God's Son from eternity, and yet He died and rose again . . . (and) in His human nature He has become Lord of heaven and earth" (XI:294).

Moreover, in his sermon for the XVIII Sunday after Trinity (XIV:193 f.) he makes a further case for the union of the human and divine natures in Christ by citing the fact that Christ, according to His human nature, was David's Son, and yet David, in Psalm 110, calls Him "Lord." He concludes: "The meaning is . . . that Christ was both David's true natural Son of his blood and flesh and also David's Lord, whom David Himself must worship and hold as God."

II. THE PURPOSE OF CHRIST'S MISSION

Having established the fundamental doctrine of the person of Christ, Luther devotes a great deal of attention to the purpose of Christ's coming to earth. He makes it clear, for one thing, that Christ came to fulfill and to consummate the Old Testament, of which He was the great theme and which abounds in types and shadows of His person and in prophecies concerning His mission. And then, of course, the essential and compelling reason for His coming into the flesh was to bring redemption to lost mankind.

A. CHRIST CAME TO FULFILL THE OLD TESTAMENT

Luther shows that Christ is the very heart of the Old Testament. He writes: "Now we have seen . . . how the deity of Christ is confirmed by the Apostle from passages in the Old Testament. For the New Testament is nothing more than a revelation of the Old. Just as one receives a sealed letter which is not to be opened until after the writer's death, so the Old Testament is the will and testament of Christ, which He has had opened after His death and read and everywhere proclaimed through the Gospel." (Sermon for Third Christmas Day, X:174.) Again he writes: "The dear saints of the Old Testament knew Christ well" (X:302); "Abraham . . . recognized Christ when he was told in Gen. 22:18: 'In thy Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed'" (XI:180); "Moses certainly writes concerning Christ, and Christ is found in the books of Moses" (XI:293).

The Old Testament era, therefore, terminated with the coming of Christ. Luther writes: "Moses (signifying the Old Testament) declares that the people will no longer hearken to him and that his teaching will end when this Prophet Christ appears, to whom they should hearken thenceforth" (X:262). And the manner in which Christ has put an end to the Old Testament dispensation he graphically states in his sermon for the II Sunday after Easter (XII:46): "If you would come to God and be saved, you must, after all, surrender Moses, the Law, the Temple, and the priesthood. All these will in no wise help you. You must come hither to Me (says Christ), whether you be Jew, Gentile, priest, layman, or what you will, even if you should be Moses himself."

B. CHRIST CAME TO BRING REDEMPTION TO MANKIND

Luther answers the question as to why Christ came into the world in this manner: "Why did God the Father send Christ? For no other purpose than to do the Father's will, namely, to redeem the world. . . . My Father hath sent Me (says Christ) to fulfill the Law, take the sin of the world upon Myself, slay death and overcome hell and the devil; not for My own sake, for I am not in need of it; but all for your sakes and in your behalf, in order that I may serve you." (Sermon for I Sunday after Easter, XI:374.)

He affirms that Christ came to seek and to save lost mankind (XIII:63 ff.; XIII:161 ff.). Indeed, the very name "Jesus" means "Savior" (X:318). Luther explains the manner in which Christ has wrought our salvation as follows: "Now, no one, not even an angel of heaven, could make restitution for the infinite, irreparable injury and appease the eternal wrath of God which we had merited by our sins; except that eternal Person, the Son of God Himself, and He could do it only by taking our place, assuming our sins, and answering for them as though He Himself were guilty of them. This our dear Lord and only Savior and Mediator before God, Jesus Christ, did for us by His blood and death, in which He became a sacrifice for us; and with His purity, innocence, and righteousness He outweighed all sin and wrath He was compelled to bear on our account; yea, this He entirely engulfed and swallowed up, and His merit is so great that God is now satisfied and says: 'If He wills thereby to save, then there

shall be a salvation.' As Christ also says of His Father's will, John 6:40: "This is the will of My Father, that everyone that beholdeth the Son and believeth on Him should have eternal life.'" (Sermon for Easter Tuesday, XI:344.)

Christ came, not as a stern and accusing Judge, but as a Helper in need (X:110) and as the Author of salvation (XII:345). He came to reconcile an aggrieved heavenly Father to His erring children by atoning for their sins and bearing the full force of divine wrath (XII:198 f.; XI:412; XII:268 ff.). To do this, He fulfilled the Law for us, in our stead (X:49), so that He has now covered the filthy garb of our sinfulness with the spotless robe of His righteousness.

Christ is the Good Shepherd, says Luther, who not only watches over and cares for His sheep with infinite love and tenderness, but even lays down His life for them, to save them from the ravening wolves (XII:21 ff.; XIII:86 ff.; *et al.*).

Now, Luther submits that Christ and His salvation cannot be apprehended by reason, but alone by faith (X:361; *et al.*), and that this faith alone can save man. He leaves no room for doubt on this score; "I will show you how to get rid of your sins and obtain salvation. Not that you can strip off your sins and make yourselves pious through your works; another man is needed for this; nor can I do it; I can point him out, however. It is Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. He, He, and no one else either in heaven or on earth takes our sins upon Himself. You yourself could not pay for the very smallest of sins. He alone must take upon Himself not alone your sins, but the sins of the world, and not some sins, but all the sins of the world, be they great or small, many or few." (Sermon for IV Sunday in Advent, X:132.)

This, then, serves to indicate the proper relationship of the Christian toward Christ, which Luther describes in this fashion: "To let go all that is mine, and value only this, that Christ is given to me as a present; His sufferings, His righteousness, and all His virtues are at once mine. When I become conscious of this, I must in return love Him; my affection must go out to such a being. . . . (His) friendly look and lovely sight then sustain me. Thus must God become known, only in Christ." (XII:253.) Luther elsewhere stresses the fact that once the believer has laid hold on Christ in faith,

He must follow His example and reflect His love in a life of service and good works (XII:40; *et al.*).

And the end and aim of Christ's work of redemption Luther sums up as follows: "It is not for the purpose of giving me many golden crowns and kingdoms, for then I would still remain in sin and death; but that I might be free from hell and eternal death, and not be lost eternally. . . . In short, God has done all this that I might have an eternal, imperishable life in exchange for eternal destruction and death." (Sermon for Pentecost Monday, XII:358 f.)

III. CHRIST'S THREEFOLD OFFICE

In the performance of His redemptive work in the interest of mankind, Christ undertook what theology calls a threefold office, namely, that of Prophet, Priest, and King.

A. CHRIST AS PROPHET

The word *prophet* in this connection is, of course, to be understood in the original sense of inspired *preacher* or *teacher*. In His capacity as Prophet, Christ revealed the will of God and proclaimed Himself to be the long-promised Messiah and Savior of the world. It was this prophetic office of Christ to which Isaiah referred, chap. 61:1: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." In explaining this verse, Luther writes: "When Isaiah says: 'He hath anointed Me,' he thereby means that Jesus is the Christ and that Christ should do all these works, and he who is doing them must be the Christ. For the Greek word *Christ* is *Messiah* in Hebrew, *Unctus* in Latin, and *Gesalbter* in German. . . . This anointed King and Priest, Isaiah says, shall be anointed by God Himself, not with real oil, but with the Holy Spirit." (Sermon for III Sunday in Advent, X:92 f.) Christ, accordingly, proved His Messiahship: a) by His works; b) by His words.

The ministry of Christ, which began with His Baptism (X:199), was the real beginning of the New Testament era, for, says Luther, "had He not begun to preach, His birth would

have been of no use; but when He *did* begin to act and to teach, then were fulfilled all prophecies, all Scriptures, then came a new light and a new world" (Sermon for IV Sunday in Advent, X:128). For the purpose of His ministry was the preaching and manifestation of the Gospel (XIII:160), that Gospel of which He Himself was the subject and the essence; for the Gospel is the glad tidings of salvation through His merit (X:100) and of His triumph over death, sin, and Satan (XI:177).

Even though Christ has left the earth, His prophetic office continues, for He decreed that all Christians should proclaim His Word (XI:359), and He established the office of the Gospel ministry, so that through the agency of His undershepherds He might gather, govern, and preserve the sheep of His fold (XII:51).

B. CHRIST AS PRIEST

The function of the priest in the Old Testament was twofold: a) to offer up sacrifices for sin; b) to intercede for the people. This Christ has done for mankind in the ultimate sense, Luther teaches. He repeatedly calls Christ a "priest" or the "high priest," and makes frequent reference to the mediatorial office of Christ (X:57: "Their faithful Priest and Mediator"; XI:32: "Our blessed Savior and High Priest, Jesus Christ"; *et al.*).

Christ performs the function of a priest in that He intercedes for His people before the throne of God, and this on the basis of His all-atoning sacrifice for sin. It is only through Christ that sinners find acceptance with God. Thus Luther writes in his sermon for Pentecost Monday, XII:342 f.: "The Holy Spirit teaches everywhere that we do not possess the Father except through a mediator, and He will not allow us to approach the Father without one"; and again: "Let us thank the Father for . . . placing between us one who is God and equal with God, and also man, on a level with man; for we are human, and He is God. Where God and man oppose each other, man meets with destruction, for he cannot stand against God. God has now intervened by placing as mediator one who is alike true God and true man. Through Him we are to come to the Father." Further: "Notice carefully that man must have a mediator, and that mediator is Christ. Ascend upon Him to the Father, and say: 'Although I cannot

exist before Thy majesty nor that of any angel — all must shake and tremble — yet I have here one, Christ, whom Thou canst not fail to regard. I am under His protection and rely upon Thy Word that Thou wilt receive me through Him." Indeed, only through Christ will prayer be effectual, says Luther: "He is our Mediator, through whom all things are given to us, without whom we merit nothing but wrath and disgrace. . . . It is praying aright in Christ's name, when we thus trust in Him that we shall be received and heard for His sake, and not for our own sake." (Sermon for V Sunday after Easter, XII:171.) Only the works of Christ are acceptable to God. By faith in Christ, His perfect righteousness is imputed to the sinner, counted to his credit, so that the sinner thus becomes righteous before God.

Expanding this theme, especially on the basis of Hebrews, Luther shows that Christ, as our great High Priest, offered up the ultimate and perfect sacrifice for sin, the sin of all the world. And, paradoxically, this sacrifice was Himself, for "He offered up His own body upon the tree." Thus Christ was at once the priest and the sacrificial offering. Luther writes in his sermon for Pentecost Monday, XII:352: "Now, the wrath of God against sin is so intense that no creature could have devised means to appease Him or effect a reconciliation; the condemnation was so enormous that no angel was mighty enough to remove it. . . . Therefore, that one Person, even God's Son, had to take upon Himself sin, God's wrath, and death, under which humanity helplessly lay, and make the sacrifice for them."

C. CHRIST AS KING

Luther also devotes much attention to the kingship of Christ and to the kingdom over which He holds sway. Luther views this kingdom in a twofold aspect. In the first place, He is Lord of all creation; the whole universe is His kingdom, as the Psalmist declares in Psalm 2 (XI:294; *et al.*).

Secondly, He rules over the Kingdom of Grace, the Holy Christian Church. This is a spiritual, eternal kingdom, not an earthly, temporal kingdom, "whereby He would everywhere rule invisibly within the hearts of men through the Word and ministry and would cause them to pass from sin, God's wrath, and eternal death into grace and eternal life

in heaven" (Sermon for Easter Tuesday, XI:332); again: "It is not to be a government constituted and organized in worldly fashion by human wisdom, power, and might, but a government of the Holy Spirit, or a spiritual kingdom, in which Christ rules invisibly, and not with external, bodily power, through the Word alone, which the Holy Spirit will preach and thereby work in the hearts of men" (Sermon for IV Sunday after Easter, XII:135); and again he says that Christ established "a kingdom on earth to be called an eternal Kingdom of Grace and always to be governed by the forgiveness of sins" (Sermon for Easter Tuesday, XI:347).

This Kingdom of Grace should not be ushered in nor characterized by pomp and fanfare and a great display of power and splendor, but by that humbleness and meekness which was the great mark of the Ruler of this Kingdom; and the subjects of this Kingdom are the poor and lowly in spirit. This of course is in direct conflict with the popular ideas current among the Jews as to the nature of the Messiah's kingdom, for they expected the Messiah to establish an earthly kingdom in which they would reign as lords and princes over the hated Gentiles and be forever free from the irksome yoke of Roman domination. These mistaken ideas of theirs led them to be gravely offended by the claims of Jesus, the humble carpenter's son of Nazareth, to be the promised Messiah and King of Israel, and therefore they rejected and condemned Him.

Luther, however, cites the entry of Christ into Jerusalem as evidence of the true nature of His kingly office. He writes, in his sermon for the I Sunday in Advent (X:42 f.): "The Prophet shows clearly what kind of king Christ was and what they should seek in Him, in that he calls Him just and having salvation and yet adds this sign of His coming by which they are to know Him: 'He cometh to thee meek and riding upon a colt, the foal of an ass.' As if to say: 'A poor, miserable, almost beggarly horseman upon a borrowed ass who is kept by the side of its mother not for ostentation, but for service.' With this he desires to lead them away from gazing and waiting for the glorious entrance of a worldly king. And he offers such signs that they might not doubt the Christ nor take offense at His beggarly appearance. All pomp and splendor are to be left out of sight, and the heart and the eyes directed

to the poor rider, who became poor and miserable and made Himself of no kingly reputation so they might not seek the things of the world in Him, but the eternal, as indicated by the words, 'just and having salvation.'" In the same vein he writes in his sermon for III Sunday in Advent (X:102 f.), that Christ corrects those who look for Him to appear in glory and majesty, and "turns their look downward and holds before them the blind, lame, deaf, dumb, poor, and everything that conflicts with such splendor, and contrariwise He presents Himself in the state of a common servant rather than a great king."

Moreover, Christ was King not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles as well. His kingdom knows no bounds of race or color or nationality, but as King over all. "He is rich unto all that call upon Him." Luther establishes and repeatedly affirms the universality of Christ's kingdom, i. e., of the Church. He states in the sermon for the II Sunday after Easter, for example: "The Gospel is to be preached to the Gentiles also, so that they also might believe in Christ, that there might be one Christian communion, composed of Jews and Gentiles. . . . Accordingly there is now but one Church or communion, one faith, one hope, one love, one Baptism, etc. And this continues to be so at the present day and will so continue until the Day of Judgment. . . . The kingdom of Christ is in the process of growing and is not something that is completed." (XII:31.) Of this growing, thriving, conquering, eternal kingdom, then, Jesus Christ is the Ruler and Head.

IV. THE STATES OF CHRIST

In the course of His life and activity, we see Christ in two states: humiliation and exaltation, as Luther plainly shows in his *Church Postil*. He brings out the fact that only through a proper understanding of these two states do we obtain a clear and complete picture of Christ.

A. HIS STATE OF HUMILIATION

Christ's state of humiliation consisted in this, that He, the eternal Son of God, voluntarily and for the sake of mankind, dispensed with the full and continuous exercise of His divine power and majesty during the period of His sojourn on earth. He became man and was subject to the infirmities and hardships

which are common to man, even to the extent of suffering and dying. His deity, therefore, was not externally evident during His life on earth, except on those occasions when He chose to manifest it (e. g., at the Transfiguration). Luther points out that the humiliation of Christ is a stone of stumbling to human reason, which cannot discern how this humble, obscure Man, persecuted by His foes and condemned to a criminal's death, could possibly be the Messiah, yea, the only-begotten Son of God. Luther recommends, therefore, that we "look at His works and compare them with the Scriptures," which will prove the best way to avoid or overcome such offense.

The first stage in the humiliation of Christ was His conception by the Holy Ghost in the womb of Mary — the first step in the assumption of the human nature. Concerning this miraculous occurrence, Luther writes: "Since no man can be born from man and woman without a sinful nature, God hath ordained to take a woman alone for the conception and birth of Christ, the promised Seed; without a man, she becomes the Child's mother, by the Holy Ghost, who causes this conception and birth in her, in order that He may be a natural man, having our flesh and blood, but without sin and power of Satan, whose head He was to bruise." (Sermon for Easter Monday, XI:297; see also X:259; *et al.*)

In the fullness of time, then, Christ was born of the Virgin Mary. Luther regards the Incarnation as one of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity; he returns to it again and again, and elaborates upon it in great detail, especially in his Christmas sermons.

Luther rejects all rationalized interpretations of the birth of Christ, and says plainly: "We must abide by the Gospel, that He was born of the Virgin Mary. There is no deception here, for the Word clearly states that it was an actual birth." (Sermon for Christmas Day, X:140.) In contrast to the unclean, sinful birth of man, he shows that Christ had a pure, innocent, and holy birth. (X:143; X:312; XI:34; X:159; *et al.*)

With regard to the visit of the Magi to the Christ Child, he writes (Sermon for Epiphany, X:363): "For although they enter a lowly hut and find a poor young wife with a poor little Child, and find less of royal appearance than the homes of their own servants presented, they are not led astray. But in a great, strong, living faith they remove from their eyes

and their minds whatever might attract or influence human nature with its pretense, follow the word of the Prophet and the sign of the star in all simplicity, treat the Child as a King, fall down before Him, worship Him, and offer gifts."

The circumcision of Jesus, which forms the theme of his sermon for New Year's Day, is cited by Luther as an evidence of how Christ began His sufferings immediately upon His advent and shed His first blood within eight days after His birth. Moreover, He thereby subjected Himself to the Law from the very outset, serving as our Substitute and fulfilling it for us. (X: 308 ff.)

Luther describes the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt shortly after the birth of Christ, and remarks: "How differently from other children is this royal Child reared and treated; how did He, especially in this case, taste the sorrows and troubles of life!" (X: 304.)

Since Scripture is silent as to the childhood of Jesus, with the exception of a few events, Luther says very little on this subject, except to reject vigorously the numerous fables and fantastic legends that were current about His childhood and which had their origin, not in Scripture, but in the Pseudepigrapha. Luther justifies the silence of Scripture on Jesus' childhood in these words: "Let us therefore be satisfied with the narrative of the Gospel, which tells us enough about His childhood. Luke writes that 'the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom,' etc. Later on he writes that He was subject to His parents. What else should he have related? The time was not yet come when He performed miracles. He was brought up like other children, with the exception, that as some children excel others in ability, Christ also was an extraordinarily clever child. Thus no more could be written concerning Him than is recorded by Luke. If he had related how He ate, drank, and what He did every day, how He walked, stood, slept, and watched, what kind of narrative would that have been?" (Sermon for Sunday after Christmas, X: 305.)

Luther does, however, devote an entire sermon (for I Sunday after Epiphany) to the account of the twelve-year-old Jesus in the Temple, in which we perceive a foregleam of His mission and obtain a glimpse into His true nature. At the same time, Luther emphasizes the fact also that this story

indicates how the young Jesus was subject to His earthly parents and performed all that was required of Him, both in the way of domestic and spiritual duties.

The very depth of the humiliation of Christ was reached, of course, in the events encompassed in the expression of the Apostles' Creed: "(He) suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried." This was the climax of His life and ministry, this was the objective of His earthly mission, this was the great denouement of the eternal plan of salvation. And for this everything that went before in His life had simply been the prelude. This, then, the very heart of the Christian religion — the setting forth of Christ Crucified — was also the heart of all of Luther's preaching. The keynote of his message from beginning to end was indeed that watchword of St. Paul: "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him Crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2) — crucified *for us*, suffering and dying *in our stead*, with His lifeblood paying the price for *our sins*, taking upon Himself the full load of *our guilt*, and bearing the punishment of that guilt as *our Substitute*, so that in and through Him we might have forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. This is the great, throbbing, central theme of Luther's preaching, and this marks him, pre-eminently, as a preacher of grace.

In his sermons Luther traces the various steps in which Christ's humiliation became increasingly evident and ever more acute. He describes His forty days of fasting in the wilderness and His temptation by Satan, which served as a prelude to His active ministry, and in which He, the eternal Son of God, allowed Himself to suffer the indignity of being tempted by the Archenemy, Satan — again, for our sake, "that He might be able to succor them that are tempted"; he shows the rejection of Christ by the Jews when He set forth to proclaim Himself as their Savior and King and to reveal Himself as God's Son, for "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (John 1:11); he pictures the slowness of heart, the fearfulness and the faithlessness of Jesus' own disciples, who consistently misunderstood His mission and purpose and who, in His hour of utmost need and distress, all forsook Him and fled; and he portrays Christ exposed to the venomous opposition and to the cruel and devious machinations of His foes, who in the end conspired to effect His arrest,

imprisonment, arraignment before the high priests, trial before the Roman governor, and finally, condemnation to a shameful criminal's death upon the accursed Cross.

Thus Luther writes concerning the suffering and death of Christ: "This is the true foundation, thoroughly to know Christ's Passion, when we not merely understand and lay hold of Christ's sufferings, but also of His heart and will in those sufferings, for whoever views His sufferings in a way that they see not His will and heart in them, must be more terrified before them than they are made to rejoice on account of them. But if one sees Christ's will and heart in His Passion, they cause true comfort, assurance, and pleasure in Christ. . . . Such a great and wonderful thing it is, that the Son of Man died on the Cross willingly and cheerfully to fulfill the Scriptures, that is, for our welfare; it is a mystery and it remains a mystery." (Sermon for Quinquagesima, XI:126 f.)

Again, Luther writes: "This is truly also a deep, hidden knowledge, that God the Father knew His only-begotten and beloved Son, when like the child of the poorest beggar He had to lie in the manger, not only unknown to His entire people, but cast out and rejected; or when He hung in the air most disgracefully and ignominiously, naked and bare, between two murderers, as the most wicked blasphemer of God, and a rebel, cursed by God and all the world, so that He was compelled to cry out to Him in great agony: 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' Matt. 27:46. Nevertheless, He says here: 'My Father knoweth Me, precisely in this suffering, disgrace, and offensive form, as His only Son, sent by Him to be the sacrifice and to offer up My soul for the salvation and redemption of His sheep.'" (Sermon for II Sunday after Easter, XII:68.) Luther elaborates upon this theme in especially great detail in his sermon for Good Friday, "A Sermon on How to Contemplate Christ's Holy Sufferings" (XI:183 ff.), which he summarizes thus: "Then cast your sins from yourself upon Christ, believe with a festive spirit that your sins are His wounds and sufferings, that He carries them and makes satisfaction for them . . . as St. Paul writes, 2 Cor. 5:21: 'He hath made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.'"

Luther's approach to the central doctrine of the atoning sacrifice of Christ may best be indicated by a quotation from

his sermon for Easter Tuesday (XI:308): "That is what Paul means when he says to the Corinthians in his First Epistle, 2:2: 'I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him Crucified.' What kind of glory is this, that impels him to write that he knows nothing save Christ Crucified? It is something which neither reason nor human wisdom can understand, nor yet they who have studied and learned the Gospel; for this wisdom is mighty, hidden, and mysterious, and seems of no value, because He was crucified and emptied Himself of all power and divine strength, and hung upon the Cross like a wretched, forsaken man, and it seemed as if God would not help Him. Of Him alone I speak and preach, says St. Paul. For the Christ who sits on high, does wonders, comes and breaks through with power, that all may see who He is and may quickly come to know Him. But to know the weak Christ, who is hanging upon the Cross and lying in death, one needs great wisdom; for they who know Him not, must needs stumble and be offended."

B. HIS STATE OF EXALTATION

The suffering, death, and burial of Christ, however, were not the end. This grim and terrifying chapter was followed by a glorious sequel. The culmination of the State of Humiliation was followed by Christ's entry upon His State of Exaltation. And of this Luther in his sermons paints a picture of the most vivid and joyful colors.

Christ did not remain in the tomb of Joseph, in which His lifeless body had been placed on Good Friday's dark afternoon. On the third day, early in the morning, He rose from the tomb, to show Himself as the Prince of Life and the Victor over death and the grave. Luther teaches that the Resurrection of Christ proved Christ to be the Son of God and His doctrine to be the truth; that God the Father has accepted the sacrifice of His Son for the reconciliation of the world; and that His Resurrection is the bond and surety for the resurrection of all believers unto eternal life.

Luther writes, in the first sermon for Easter Sunday (XI:216): "It is not enough to learn only how and when Christ our Lord rose from the dead; we must also preach and understand the benefit and use both of the sufferings and the resurrection of Christ, namely, what He thereby acquired

for us." This he further explains by saying: "You must believe that He rose for your sake, for your benefit; and was not glorified for His own sake, but that He might help you and all who believe in Him; and that through His resurrection sin, death, and hell are vanquished and the victory given you" (Sermon for I Sunday after Easter, XI:354).

The resurrection of Christ is indeed a fundamental tenet of the Christian faith, without which the entire structure would collapse, as Luther very logically argues in his sermon for Ascension Day (XII:199): "If Christ be not risen from the dead, then sin and death have devoured and slain Him, and we cannot get rid of our sins ourselves. Jesus Christ took them upon Himself, so that He might tread sin, death, and hell underfoot, and become their master. But if He be not risen, then He has not overcome sin, but was overcome by sin. Also, if He has been overcome by sin, then He is not risen; if He be not risen, then He has not redeemed you; then you are yet in your sins."

After His resurrection on Easter morning, Christ remained on earth for a period of forty days, albeit in a glorified body, appearing to His disciples from time to time to confirm their faith with the visible demonstration of His bodily resurrection and to give them further instruction and counsel. At the end of that period He assembled His followers upon the Mount of Olives, gave them a farewell message, and, while they beheld, slowly ascended up into heaven, a cloud receiving Him out of their sight. It is to this theme that Luther devotes himself in his sermon for Ascension Day (XII:180 ff.). He writes: "Now we must consider the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. . . . All the Prophets took great pains in describing Christ's ascension and His kingdom. For, as His sufferings and death are deeply founded in the Scriptures, so are also His kingdom, His resurrection and ascension. In this manner we must view the ascension of Christ. . . . And for this purpose did He ascend up thither that He might fill all things and be everywhere present; which thing He could not do had He remained on earth, for here in the body He could not have been present with all. He ascended to heaven, where all hearts can see Him, where He can deal with all men, that He might fill all creation. Nothing is so great, be it in heaven or on earth, but He has power over it, and it must be in perfect obedience to Him."

This, then, leads to the next stage of Christ's exaltation, namely, His session on the right hand of the Father. This, of course, is not to be understood in a physical, corporeal sense. Since God is a spirit, He has no right hand in the material sense of that term. The expression "sitting at the right hand of God the Father Almighty" means that Christ has re-entered into the full exercise of His divine power and majesty and, by virtue of His deity, rules and governs all things.

Luther writes, in his sermon for III Sunday after Easter (XII:98 f.): "Christ, God's Son, became man, suffered death on the Cross, but rose again and sits now at the right hand of the Father, Lord over all, even according to His human nature, and governs and preserves His Church against Satan's wrath and all the power of the world." Again: "For this reason He is risen from the dead and ascended to heaven, that He might begin a spiritual kingdom, in which He reigns in us through righteousness and truth. Therefore He sits above; He does not rest and sleep, does not play with Himself, but, as Paul says, Eph. 1:22, "has His work here upon the earth, governing the consciences and the souls of men with the Gospel." (See also X:19 f.)

From His heavenly throne, says Luther, Christ also sends the Holy Spirit into the hearts of men, and portrays Christ as saying: "When the Holy Spirit comes, you will be glad that I went to the Father. . . . My suffering and death will be comforting to you when you see that I live again and that I come to help you and to make you partakers of all the treasures I have." Therefore, concludes Luther: "We Christians are to become lords over all God's creation and to boastfully say of Christ: My Lord Christ, who takes my part, is lord over all things; what shall harm me? For the Father in His infinite power has made Him lord over all creatures, and all things must lie at His feet." (Sermon for Pentecost Sunday, XII:286 f.)

Enthroned in His eternal majesty and power, Christ is portrayed by Luther also as judging Satan and all his enemies, all those who reject Him. He does this through the medium of His convicting Word, until, on Judgment Day, all His foes will be effectually and forever trodden underfoot and be forced to acknowledge His victory. (Cf. XII:155 f.)

His coming to Judgment will be the final stage of His

State of Exaltation. Luther explains (X: 74 f.) that Christ will come on the Last Day, accompanied by the great host of angels, in great majesty and splendor, and visible to all creation (in profound contrast to the humble, obscure manner of His first coming, in His birth at Bethlehem). While the coming of this day will be foreshadowed by various signs, both in nature and in mankind, the exact time must ever remain a mystery hidden from men and known alone to God.

At His coming, says Luther, "He will transplant all who have believed in Him and have exercised love toward His followers, into His Father's kingdom of eternal glory, all who believe in Him and love His saints; and, He will also cast into hell forever all who live not as Christians and who separate themselves from Him and all His saints" (Sermon for XXVI Sunday after Trinity, XIV:381). Luther concludes that while this must be a terrifying doctrine for the unbelievers, for the Christians it holds forth the most glorious and comforting promise.

This, then, is Luther's picture of Christ as he paints it in the *Church Postil* sermons. It is, to be sure, a picture of beauty and grandeur, exact in detail and both vivid and reverent in its manner of portrayal—a picture which could be painted only by an artist upon whose soul this picture had already left its indelible impress.

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All Christians Believe in Justification by Faith*

There is a great diversity among the Christians. Some are strong in their faith, while others are weak Christians. Some have an excellent knowledge of the Christian doctrine, others are woefully deficient in this respect (Eph. 4:13, 14; Rom. 14:1 ff.). There are orthodox Christians and heterodox Christians. (See Chap. 1 in "Saving Faith": "Orthodoxy and membership in the Christian Church are not conterminous.") But there is full accord among the Christians on the doctrine of justification. All Christians are at one in believing that God forgives their sins by grace, for Christ's sake, without any merit of their own. For it is this faith which makes the Christian.

A person does not become a Christian by believing in the existence of God—even the heathen know that there is a God, Rom. 1:19; not by believing that God created the world and governs it—the heathen know that, too, in a measure; not by believing that God rewards good deeds and punishes evil deeds—the heathen have retained that knowledge, too, Rom. 1:32; 2:14-15; not by striving to obey the voice of conscience—the heathen do that and yet have no hope, Eph. 2:12; nor by giving assent to the "story of Christ," of the Son of God, who died and rose again—even the devils believe that, Matt. 8:29. No, a person becomes a Christian, a member of the Christian Church, only when in the *terrores conscientiae* he completely despairs of his own morality and through the operation of the Holy Ghost comes to believe the "*effectus*" of the "story of Christ," namely, that his sins are forgiven him for Christ's sake; in other words, when he by faith applies justification to himself.

In the Old Testament all Prophets taught the article of justification by faith and all children of God believed in it.¹

* We are here submitting some sample pages from the prospective translation of Dr. F. Pieper's *Christliche Dogmatik*.—This chapter, like all the rest of Pieper's classical work, contains a vibrant message to the Church.—TH. ENGELDER.

¹ Acts 10:43: "To Him give all the Prophets witness that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins."

And in the New Testament the Apostles taught the same, and all Christians believe in it to the Last Day.² All who do not have this faith, but seek justification by their works are under the curse, Gal. 3:10, are *extra ecclesiam*, are "either Jews or Turks or Papists or heretics" (Luther, IX:17 ff.). And among the Papists there are true Christians, who, in defiance of the teaching of the Pope, put their trust solely in God's mercy in Christ and not in "infused grace."³ Among the heterodox Protestants there are also many who, while in their writings and theological disputations they vitiate the article of justification by the introduction of works, in their heart and before God believe in justification by faith alone.⁴ This unanimous agreement in the doctrine of justification is the "unity of

See Luther on this passage, XII:491 ff. St. Paul takes the prooftexts for the doctrine of the "righteousness of God without the Law" from the Old Testament, Rom. 3 and 4; Gal. 3:6-29; cf. Luther on the protevangelium, Gen. 3:15, in I:230 ff. — The "exegetical acumen" of those exegetes who find that the "Seed of the woman" in Gen. 3:15 refers not to the individual person of Christ, but to "the descendants of woman in general" fails to observe the rule (which even "scientific" exegesis dare not ignore) that the predicate defines the subject. Now, it is stated that the Seed of the woman "shall bruise thy head," hence that the Seed of the woman will overcome the devil, i.e., remove the guilt of sin, which the devil's seduction brought upon all men (John 12:31 ff.; 16:11). That can be predicated not of the descendants of woman in general, but only of the one Descendant of the woman, of Christ. This applies also to the "Seed of Abraham." Paul was not guilty of "rabbinical" exegesis, as Meyer (on Gal. 3:16) charges. Cf. Philippi's excursus on Rom. 4.

² Paul wrote the words of Rom. 3:28; 5:1 ff. in the name of all Christians. The children of God in the New Testament are all "the children of Abraham" because they are "of faith," Gal. 3:7.

³ Apology: "Therefore, even though Popes, or some theologians, and monks in the Church have taught us to seek remission of sin, grace, and righteousness through our own works, and to invent new forms of worship, which have obscured the office of Christ, and have made out of Christ not a Propitiator and Justifier, but only a Legislator, nevertheless the knowledge of Christ has always remained with some godly persons" (*Trigl.*, 225, 271).

⁴ Luther: "When they are engaged in words and disputations, they are one thing; but another when they come to experience and practice. In the former, they speak differently from what they felt before; in the latter, they feel differently from what they spoke before." (*De Servo Arbitrio*, XVIII:1730.) Chemnitz: "These few passages" (from the writings of the Fathers) "I have adduced to show that our doctrine of justification has the testimony of all the pious who ever lived; they gave this testimony not in declamatory lectures and in idle disputations, but in the serious exercise of repentance and faith, when the conscience must wrestle with its own unworthiness before the judgment of God and in the agony of death." (*Examen*, "De justificatione," p. 144.)

spirit" in which the Holy Ghost keeps the whole Christian Church. (*Hymnal*, 251:3.) ⁵

That all Christians of all ages and all lands are one in the article of justification is thus set forth by Luther: "The faith that we obtain the forgiveness of sins solely for Christ's sake by faith has been the faith of the Fathers and prophets and all saints from the beginning of the world and has been the doctrine and preaching of Christ and the apostles, who were commissioned to spread it in all the world, and is to this day, and will be to the end, the unanimous understanding and voice of the whole Christian Church, which has always in one mind and with one accord confessed and fought for this article that alone in the name of the Lord Jesus forgiveness of sins is obtained and received, and in this faith they have been justified before God and saved." (XII: 494 ff.)

Confessing the πίστει χωρίς ἔργων νόμου clearly and unambiguously over against any perversion thereof, Luther and the Lutheran Church do not represent a faction in the Church, but are the mouthpiece of all Christendom on earth.

F. PIEPER (*Christliche Dogmatik*, II, p. 621 ff.,
Justification by Faith, Chap. 5)

⁵ Apology: "We know that those things which we have said are in harmony with the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures . . . and with the whole Church of Christ, which certainly confesses that Christ is Propitiator and Justifier" (*Trigl.*, 225, 268).

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Homiletics

A Series of Sermon Studies for the Church Year

MISERICORDIAS DOMINI

HEB. 4: 9-13

The Text and the Day. — To discover the full scope of this text, we must consider it not only in its immediate context, but also against the background of the entire Epistle. The Epistle was addressed to Jewish Christians who, living in a world of tensions, temptations, and troubles, had grown spiritually weary, largely because they were losing the vision of the Christ and a true appreciation of the blessings of the Gospel and the Christian way of life. Disappointed in their expectations, they had begun to surrender to a paralyzing nostalgia for ancient Judaism. In order to combat this trend and to restore them to a vital and triumphant faith and hope, the Epistle portrays the true significance of Jesus and His work as well as the benedictions of heaven which come into the life of a Christian through faith in Him. The text is taken from a passage which glorifies Christ as the perfect Mediator, far surpassing all mediators of the Old Covenant. — The text is in harmony with the name of the Sunday. The Gospel for the day furnishes the doctrinal basis for its teachings, particularly in the light of Psalm 23.

Notes on Meaning — The key word of the text is "rest," the rest prepared by Jesus for the people of God. Not a mere cessation from labor, but a hallowed Sabbath rest, patterned after the rest enjoyed by God Himself. Neither only a rest prepared by God, but a rest in God, a participation in that rest which is God's own. "His rest" (v. 10) refers to God's own rest. This rest "remains" for us, not in the sense that we cannot obtain it in this life because it is restricted to heaven, but because it exists even now as a blessed and permanent reality which no man can ever take from us. However, it belongs only to "the people of God," to those who have become His very own through faith in Jesus. But even though this rest remains for us, it is possible that we may

never enter into it, for we are in danger of following in the footsteps of the ancient Israelites, 3:16—4:2. Through unbelief man forfeits this rest, through faith he shares in it, 4:3. Accordingly, it behooves us to strive diligently to obtain this rest, v. 11. Carelessness in this respect may lead to eternal tragedy. Only steadfast "partakers of Christ" are entitled to it and qualified for it, 3:14. The hypocrite, no matter how holy he may appear, is forever barred from it, for his unbelief and ungodly character are exposed and judged by the living (quick) and penetrating Word of God (v. 12) and, above all, by God himself, whom no man can deceive, v. 13.

Preaching Pitfalls. — Two dangers must be avoided: 1. Restricting the sermon to a mere exposition of the text; 2. Choosing a topic such as "rest" and ignoring the characteristic details of the text." — This text is commonly used for a discussion of the everlasting rest of the saints in heaven, but such a treatment violates both text and context. The rest spoken of here begins on earth the moment faith is kindled in the heart, but reaches its perfection in heaven. — Be careful not to omit Christ and His atonement. Cf. 2:14-18. — Since vv. 12-13 are a part of the text, the warning they contain must receive due consideration. — A theoretical discussion is not enough. The truths of the text must be presented in terms of present-day problems and their solutions.

Preaching Emphases. — The primary emphasis must be given to the fact that the rest craved by the human heart is not a Utopian dream, but an ever-ready blessing of God in which all may share by faith in Christ. The secondary emphasis belongs to the warning and exhortation in vv. 12-13.

Problem and Goal. — The problem is the Christian's natural lack of interest in Christ and His Gospel promises and His evil inclination to seek rest (peace of mind and happiness) elsewhere, concentrating on visible and temporal things and thus losing the vision of the unseen and the eternal. — The goal is the solution of this problem by persuading the hearer to strive diligently and according to the Gospel for genuine rest in God, 4:1. Augustine: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, O God, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee."

Outline:

OUR REST IN GOD

I. *What a wonderful rest it is.*

A. A sharing with God in His divine rest, v. 10.

1. Peace of mind and heart in this life;

2. Everlasting rest in heaven.

B. A present and enduring reality ("remaineth"), v. 9.

II. *How we entered into it.*

A. By the grace of God the Gospel was preached to us. Cf. v. 2.

B. By the power of the Holy Spirit we were brought to faith ("people of God"), v. 9. Cf. v. 3 a.

III. *What we must do to abide in it forever.*

A. Recognize that we may still lose it, v. 11. Cf. v. 1 f.

1. Through unbelief we forfeit it, v. 11;

2. External piety cannot hide an unbelieving heart from God, v. 12 f.

B. Strive diligently and continuously to possess it even though we already have it, v. 11 a. Cf. 3:14.

E. J. FRIEDRICH

JUBILATE

1 JOHN 4:9-16

The Text and the Day. — This Sunday has been appointed in Eastertide to impress upon our minds that the Christian religion is a religion of joy. Our joy in the risen Redeemer causes us to rejoice even in tribulations (Gospel) and is reflected in our relation with our fellow men (Epistle). Hence the Introit, Collect, and Gradual. Likewise, the text before us fills us with grateful jubilation and urges us to make manifest our joy in our love toward our brethren.

Notes on Meaning. — V. 9: "In this," in this way, refers to what follows. "Toward us," we are the recipients of God's love. We, the believers, are they who truly see what God has done in His infinite love. "His only-begotten Son" attests the deity of Jesus. "Might live," cf. 1:2; 2:29; 3:9. V. 9 as

well as vv. 10 and 14 expresses the Easter note in the text. — V. 10: "Herein is love," love with the definite article, true love, love *sui generis*. "Propitiation," only here and 2:2, not appeasement, rather expiation, to make complete satisfaction. Cf. C. T. M. VIII, 277 ff. — V. 11: "If God so loved us," does not indicate uncertainty, but is a condition of reality. — V. 12: Although no man has seen God, still in a true Christian, who loves his brethren, God, so to speak, takes form and lets Himself be seen. "His love," *gen. subj.* "Is perfected," means to achieve its purpose. God's love reaches its goal in us when God permanently abides in us and molds us to be like Himself. — V. 13: "Of His Spirit," rather, "from His Spirit." God gives the believers His Spirit (3:24), and from the Spirit come spiritual gifts. — V. 16 emphasizes the certainty of God's love.

Preaching Pitfalls — We should expect the Apostle to say that since God loved us with such an amazing love, we, in turn, should love Him. He does that vv. 19-21. In our text the Apostle is stressing love toward our fellow believers. They who are united with us in the love of God must be the first object of our love. Since God's love is all-inclusive, our love will naturally include all men. But "love one another" comes first.

Preaching Emphases. — The text is designated for Easter-tide. The risen Redeemer is the living Assurance and Guarantee of God's love toward us and of all the gifts of His love. Furthermore, the doctrine of the atonement and resurrection of Christ has a direct bearing upon our attitudes among men. Reconciliation with God prompts reconciliation with men. God's love toward us begets love of the brethren. Our own salvation urges upon us the salvation of others. Easter and all that it implies must not be overlooked.

Problem and Goal. — The Christian religion is a religion of joy because it is a religion of love. In our text the word *love* and its cognates occur 12 times. The principle of love is so intimately connected with the Christian religion that Christianity stands and falls with that principle. It is not enough that we call ourselves Christian; we must show and demonstrate our Christianity at all times and toward all men. Genuine Christianity rejoices in the Lord always and urges the Christian to share his joy with others.

Outline:

REJOICE IN THE LOVE OF GOD

- I. Consider the gifts of His love.
 - A. Redemption, life, and salvation, vv. 9, 10, 14.
 - B. His dwelling in you and His gifts of the Spirit, vv. 12 b, 13, 15.
 - C. Therefore "*Jubilate*."
- II. Manifest your joy in love toward the brethren.
 - A. Love toward the brethren is evidence of your union with God, vv. 11, 16.
 - B. Your love toward the brethren perfects God's love, v. 12.
 - C. Your love toward the brethren makes your "*Jubilate*" genuine.

WALTER A. BAEPLER

CANTATE

PHIL. 2:1-4

The Text and the Day. — This text connects closely with the Propers for Cantate. The Epistle sets forth God as the Author of all Christian behavior. The Gospel speaks of the Spirit as guiding the believer into all truth, practical as well as theoretical. The Collect speaks of the minds of the faithful as being made of one will by God and as being taught to love what God commands and to desire what He promises. The Gradual, setting forth divine power and victory over death through Christ's resurrection, lays the firm foundation for a Christian life.

Notes on Meaning. — While there is some exegetical difficulty in v. 1, it is fortunate that it does not affect the thought of the text. Thus for sermon work either of the two accepted translations will serve quite well. The versions and most commentators translate the *ei* clauses as protases to v. 2: "If . . . if, then fulfill my joy." The thought would be, then, that Paul adjures the Philippians by the encouragement, comfort, fellowship, tenderness, and sympathy that they have toward one another. Von Hofmann, Ewald, Lenski, and others regard vv. 1-2 as separate sentences, v. 2 not at all as the apodosis. Hermeneutical rules would seem to favor this

view. Accordingly v.1 would contain both protases and apodoses, the last *ei tis* being a repetition of the previous one, with an emphasizing of the *ei*. The meaning would then be: "If encouragement, let it be in Christ; if comfort, let it be of love; if fellowship, let it be of the Spirit; if any (fellowship), let it express itself in tenderness and sympathy.

Preaching Emphases.—This text obviously stresses the necessity of exhibiting the Christian virtues not only over against the enemies of the faith (1:28) but also toward the brethren. The latter need encouragement, probably because of the terrifying conduct of the adversaries. This encouragement is to stem out of their union with Christ. His patient suffering and death is more than an example. It is a source of strength, since by it they are made His own. We can therefore be sure of His guarding and keeping. When comfort is given, let it not be perfunctory or actuated by mere sentimentality or humanitarian feeling, but let its source be genuine Christian love which is both intelligent and purposeful. This requires also supplying the necessities of life. See James 1:22 ff. and 2:15-16. Where there is fellowshiping, let it be that which results from the fact that we are all temples of God's Spirit. Hence the nature of the fellowship must be spiritual in tone and character. Christian fellowship must be on a higher plane than the get-togethers and parties of worldlings. Dances, card games, raffles, beer bouts, cocktail parties, are scarcely such fellowshiping. Nor are luncheons, dinners, and bazaars whose purpose is to "make money" for the church. Instead there will be real tenderness and sympathetic pity. See *Lutheran Hymnal* 464:3.

Problem and Goal.—Christians will be truly joined in soul and will exhibit a common mind and purpose. Natural selfishness will be replaced by unselfish furthering of the brother's welfare. When we note how often a factious spirit invades our congregations, how cold love sometimes is, one can readily perceive how great the emphasis must be on true sanctification. But only the redeeming and sanctifying love of Christ can make the heart willing. Paul shows that with his "in behalf of Christ" (1:29), "that is of God" (1:28), "in Christ" and "of the Spirit" (2:1). Note how Paul shows his personal interest by speaking of his joy. We, too, must bring our whole being to bear on leading our hearers to see the

importance of sanctification. Fervor in presentation and personal consecration are prime requisites. Such sanctification will always bring joy to the heart of every pastor and Christian, as it did to Paul.

Outline:

"LOVE'S LABOR NOT LOST"

- I. Love's labor is *Heaven born*.
 - A. Established by our union with Christ in *faith*.
 - B. Maintained by the indwelling Spirit.
 - C. The means of grace must be faithfully used.
- II. Love's labor is earth centered.
 - A. Directed toward adversaries and brethren.
 - B. Meets their physical and spiritual needs.
- III. Love's labor tends heavenward by bringing deep and lasting joy.
 - A. Pastors and all who love God's work know heaven's joy.
 - B. Advertises Christianity and so brings joy of heaven to those who accept it.
 - C. Continues into eternal life.
 - D. Causes joy in heaven before God and angels. Only hell is despondent.

ARTHUR C. NITZ

ROGATE

1 TIM. 2:1-6

The Text and the Day—The name "Rogate" does not come from the Introit for the Sunday, but from the Savior's promise concerning prayer in the regularly appointed Gospel. The text is eminently suited for this "Prayer Sunday."

Notes on Meaning.—V. 1: These are not four types of prayers but an emphasis on various aspects of the same type. Paul is speaking of intercessory prayer. According to the original terms, "supplication" emphasizes the need of our prayer (Bittgebet); "prayers," the devotional attitude; "intercessions," the confidence and trust of our prayers as we approach the heavenly Father; and "thanksgiving," as the

translation indicates, the thankfulness of the suppliant. (Cp. Thayer.)

"For all men" — the universality of our prayers, which is based on the universal redemption, is the beautiful thread that runs through the text. Cp. vv. 4, 6.

V. 2: The Apostle lifts out from among "all men" for particular emphasis the rulers and governmental authorities. Humanly speaking, so much of the welfare of men, also the spiritual, is in their hands. Their responsibility invites the Christian's prayers. Not only are we to pray for our rulers, but the rulers of all nations. This is particularly important in a world so interdependent as ours. One faithless ruler can set the fires of war. Peace among and within the nations is conducive to the growth of the Church. Government hostility and political disturbances do not further the general welfare of the Church. The few real "foxhole conversions" are pitifully small when compared with the harm done to the moral and spiritual life of the military and civilians.

V. 3: Here we have the reason why Christians should extend their privilege of prayer to all men. It is good in the sight of God, the Savior of all men.

V. 4: God loved all, hence wants all, redeemed all, and now is anxious that all are sanctified. Our prayers must make common cause with God's will in behalf of all.

Vv. 5-6: This is but natural for God, who is God of all. He has the same will for all. Furthermore, He has engaged an Advocate for His court who is prepared to plead for one and all. This Advocate is not only prepared to plead our case, but One who has paid the full punishment, so that His plea has weight. As Christ is the Christian's Mediator, so the Christian mediates for all men in his prayers. Of this He gave witness at the proper time.

Preaching Emphases. — Christians have the blessed privilege of prayer. Unfortunately they are so slow in using it, even for themselves. Still less often do they use this powerful plea for others. More often the "others" are a very small circle. Like Jonah, we are prone to keep the blessings for "our people." But God did not plan this gift for the benefit of a closed group. Christians are to pray for all men, as He so clearly emphasizes in the Lord's Prayer. Nowhere else is

the magnitude of the Christian's intercessions so well emphasized as in the plurals of the Lord's Prayer.

The Christians are to be mediators, advocates for all men. They alone are at peace with God. This peace is not simply a cessation of hostility to turn into a "cold war." We are His intimate friends; yes, part of the family of God. We "have something," and this must be used in behalf of all.

God wants us "to do good unto all men." We cannot reach all men, but we can all reach God. Even those whom we do reach receive pitifully little help unless it is done prayerfully so that God becomes the partner in our venture.

Yes, all men. It's easy to pray for friends; easier still to pray for the perfect stranger. It is hard to pray for those against whom we are prejudiced; it is harder, almost impossible, to pray for our enemies. But there it is, "all men." God's universal love, which found even us, is the dynamic which can make it possible.

Our prayers are international, not merely for our rulers. God is the first Internationalist, for with Him it is "one world"; the Christian should be the first citizen of this "one world."

Such prayers bring results. They help lead the good and peaceable life. This is especially so since we must follow through with our prayers unto all men by doing good to all men.

This obligation to intercede for all naturally rises out of the very person of God. He is the God of all. As such He has an intense love for all in spite of man's enmity, a love that was active in the universal redemption and the desire for a universal salvation. It is still active, for His Spirit seeks out men to generate faith in their hearts.

Problem and Goal. — The first mention of prayer brings to mind *our* needs, and we quickly go to God for relief. But the privilege of prayer goes beyond that. It has greater magnitude. It carries with it the directive to use this "address" in behalf of all so that piety and peace may come upon all men.

Outline:

THE MAGNITUDE OF THE CHRISTIAN'S INTERCESSIONS

I. The obligation.

- A. Christians are mediators.
- B. They intercede for all men.
- C. So they bring blessings upon all.

II. The basis

- A. Their God is the God of all.
- B. Their God is the Redeemer of all.
- C. Their Christ would be the Mediator of all.

ARTHUR C. REPP

ASCENSION

COL. 3:1-4

The Text and the Day. — The Ascension Day message not only presents the fact that Christ ascended, but lays special emphasis on the fruit of His ascension. The Lord works with and through His disciples and directs their attention to His second coming. Our text shows what the ascension of Christ means to His Christians.

Notes on Meaning. — "Risen": through faith, ch. 2:12-13; Rom. 6:4. This resurrection is the beginning of spiritual life within us. "Above": heavenly treasures, things pertaining to eternal life, 1 Pet. 1:4-6. "We should neither love nor seek anything more than God and His Word." Through faith we even now possess the treasures of heaven, John 20:17; so should we after our spiritual resurrection. "Christ sitteth": Christ ascended to the right hand of God, Mark 16:19. Cf. Form. Concord, S. D., VIII, pars. 28 and 12. "Affection": intellect and will. Things on earth are present. There is no occasion to seek them, but there is danger of setting our mind on them. "Above": Christ calls us up to Himself. No man can serve two masters, Matt. 6:24. "Dead": to this world and to our flesh. As through faith we have communion with Christ, so also with His death. We died in and with Christ. "Hid": as Christ rules invisibly after His ascension, so our life is hid in Him. 1 John 3:2; 2 Cor. 4:5. The Church is invisible. Christians are persecuted and mocked. Their weakness and sinfulness very visible. "While they live on earth, they are not adorned with the color of God, but that of the miserable devil." Luther, St. L. XII, 730. "In God": Our spiritual and eternal life is safely placed in God's hands. Observe the deep mystical meaning. "Our life": He is the Source of our life and sustains it. "Appear": Acts 1:11. "In glory": We shall not only be raised from the dead, but also ascend with Him into glory.

Preaching Pitfalls.—The “raised with Christ” (v. 1), must not be neglected. The Apostle speaks to Christians. Only on the basis of our justification can the sanctification stressed in the remainder of the text be properly presented. Christ’s ascension and His sitting at the right hand of God must not be treated as museum antiques, but as motivating and energizing forces in our Christian life.

Problem and Goal.—Ascension Day is a “forgotten festival” and frequently neglected, not so much because of economic conditions as rather because of our proneness to forget what the ascension of Christ means to us. The sermon is to inspire us to live in the presence of the ascended and glorified Christ and to serve Him with a triumphant life. The final point of the sermon may well include a note of comfort.

Outline:

Introduction: Story of Ascension. The crowning of the Savior’s work of redemption. This made a tremendous impact upon the disciples.

THE IMPACT OF CHRIST’S ASCENSION UPON CHRISTIANS

- I. Turns their thoughts (affections) from earth to heaven.
 - A. Text is addressed to Christians, v. 1 a.
 - B. Let us seek the things above.
 - C. Let us set our affections on them. *Lutheran Hymnal*, 214:5.
- II. Deepens their spiritual life on earth.
 - A. Life hid in Christ. Ascended Lord stands in intimate union with us.
 - B. A blessed activity—dead unto sin, alive to God.
- III. Fills them with the hope of sharing Christ’s glory, v. 4.
 - A. The ascended Lord will manifest His glory to all.
 - B. We shall share in this glory.
 - C. The goal of our life: Through faith in the Lord we serve Him here in time, and we shall share His glory in eternity.

VICTOR MENNICKE

EXAUDI

EPH. 1: 20 b-23

The Text and the Day. — Ascension focuses our attention on the exalted Christ, Pentecost on the founding of His Church. This text for Exaudi, the Sunday between Ascension and Pentecost, fittingly brings the two foci together by showing us what the exalted Christ does for the Church, which He founded.

Notes on Meaning. — "God set Him [Christ] at His own right hand." God's "right hand" is where God is, everywhere. Being at God's right hand, Christ, yes, the Man Christ — for He ascended according to His human nature — is everywhere. More, since God is a spirit, His right hand is not of flesh and bone; it is a symbol of His almighty power. Therefore the statement that "God set Christ at His own right hand" means that Christ not only is everywhere, but also rules everywhere with God's almighty power.

This majestic truth is now amplified: "*In the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion.*" Christ rules over the heavenly angels. These are many and mighty — note the heaping of names implying authority and power. "*One angel,*" says Luther, "is mightier than the whole world." But Christ is "*far above all*" angels — "*And every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under His feet.*" Ps. 8: 6-8; Heb. 2: 7-9. Christ is Lord of all in heaven, earth, and hell. Kings, dictators, planets, atoms, the very devils — everything is subject to the exalted Christ. He reigns supreme; "and He shall reign forever and ever."

And now we come to the heart of this great text: "*And gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church.*" First God gives the rule of the universe to Christ; and then God gives Christ, this Christ, who is the Ruler of the universe, to the Church as her Head. So we arrive at the breath-taking truth that Christ rules the universe in the interest of His Church. The world continues and world affairs are being regulated by Christ for *one* purpose: "This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world . . . and then shall the end come," Matt. 24:14. Examples of the ruling and overruling providence of Christ in behalf of His Church:

Roman highway system and Greek world language at the time of Apostles; discovery of America and invention of printing press shortly before Reformation; advanced means of transportation and communication (automobile, aeroplane, radio, television) today.

But Christ does still more for His Church. He is her Head; she is "*His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.*" The Christ, who mightily fills all things, is the gracious Fullness of His Church. He is her Life, her Strength, her Hope of glory — her All.

Preaching Emphases and Goal. — The text emphasizes the greatness, the security, and the assured success of the *Una Sancta*. All these are hers through Christ, her Head.

The Church shall never perish!
Her dear Lord, to defend,
To guide, sustain, and cherish,
Is with her to the end.

Our people need to catch this vision glorious of the invisible Church. To be and remain members of this Church, and to spend and be spent in her extension throughout the world, these are the only worth-while purposes of our lives.

Outline:

"THE CHURCH SHALL NEVER PERISH"

or

WHAT THE EXALTED CHRIST DOES FOR HIS CHURCH

- I. Christ mightily rules the universe in the interest of His Church.
 - A. God has given the rulership of the universe to Christ.
 - B. God has given Christ, the Ruler of the universe, to the Church as her Head.
- II. Christ graciously fills the Church with His fullness.
 - A. He is her Life.
 - B. He is her Strength.
 - C. He is her Hope of glory.

OSWALD RIESS



Miscellanea

The Liturgical Crisis in Wittenberg, 1524 *

E. REIM

It is generally conceded that a proper understanding of Luther's liturgical writings not only calls for careful study of the documents themselves, but also presupposes thorough familiarity with the general historical background as well as the particular circumstances under which the individual papers were written. One gains a far better understanding of the tentative *Von der Ordnung des Gottesdienstes in der Gemeinde* and the sober and thoughtful *Formula Missae* if one considers the disorderly excesses which Carlstadt had provoked in his misguided attempts to reform the worship of the Wittenberg congregation. Further light is thrown on the subject if one is aware of the difficult conditions under which Luther's friend Hausmann was laboring at Zwickau where he was opposing the radical tendencies of Muenzer and yet had no constructive and conservative counter-proposals to offer. These and other contributing factors usually receive ample consideration when this major liturgical work of Luther is under consideration.

Too little attention is, however, being given to a subsequent pamphlet of Luther, "Concerning the Abomination of the Canon of the Mass" (*Vom Greuel der Stillmesse*). It was an unprecedented and drastic step when Luther not only published but also translated into German that part of the Mass which contained the Consecration with the supposed transubstantiation of the elements into the Body and Blood of Christ. For this part was considered so sacred that in compliance with the rubrics it was said in a tone of voice so low as to be inaudible to the congregation — hence the German name: *Stillmesse*. It was even more serious a matter when Luther illustrated this text with a running commentary in which he exposed the idolatrous character of the prayers and the constant reference to the propitiatory sacrifice which was supposedly there being performed by the hands of the priest. For this was pungent and caustic comment, indeed, and withering criticism, such as Luther was capable of when thoroughly aroused. It was Luther at his best — or worst — depending on how one feels about the matter. But regardless of any one's personal leanings, it is historically and liturgically an important document.

It is with a peculiar sense of unreality, therefore, that one reads the English translation of this pamphlet as it appears in Vol. VI of the Works of Martin Luther (Philadelphia Edition). For here we have the Canon alone, without Luther's comments: the object of criticism without the critique! Whether this pro-

* This article appeared in the *Quartalschrift* (*Theological Quarterly*) of July, 1948, and is here reprinted by the kind permission of that journal.

cedure is justified by the remark of the editor, Dr. Paul Zeller Strodach, that Luther's "comments are not always in good spirit or good taste or fair," the reader may judge for himself by reading the unexpurgated version in some of the other available editions (e. g., St. Louis, XIX, 1198—1213). Dr. Strodach finds the chief value of the document in this that it supplies the exact text of the Mass which was used by Luther. When he then concludes: "As our interest in this pamphlet is a liturgical one only, the Canon alone has been translated," one is tempted to ask whether the form of the text is to constitute the chief interest of the student of Lutheran liturgies or whether subject matter and historical background are not even more important. It is with the intention of supplying this background, which in turn will enable one to judge the propriety of Luther's vehemence in speaking of the "Abomination of the Canon," that this article is written.*

The liturgical crisis which came to a head in Wittenberg in 1524 developed gradually. Luther's chief concern had been, and indeed always remained, about matters of doctrine. But for that very reason it was inevitable that he touched on practices which were inseparably connected with the prevailing forms of worship, particularly the withholding of the cup, the saying of private masses, and the manner in which the Sacrament had been turned into a propitiatory sacrifice. Against these errors Luther testified repeatedly and plainly in his sermons and writings, even after he was confined to the Wartburg. The result was that things began to change in Wittenberg in spite of the absence of Luther. In September, 1521, Communion under both kinds was celebrated in the Parish Church. A month later the reading of masses in the Chapel of the Augustinian Monastery was discontinued. Even at the Castle Church it became impossible to keep up the daily program of masses because of numerous resignations of priests who no longer could reconcile these duties with their newly enlightened consciences.

Luther's elation over these quiet victories of the Word was soon disturbed by the excesses of a radical element which under the leadership of Carlstadt shattered the peace of Wittenberg with the violence of their reforms. This moved Luther to return to Wittenberg (March 6, 1522), where his famous Eight Sermons were soon instrumental in restoring order. The conservative character of his reformation was re-established and vindicated. Radicalism was emphatically disavowed.

But by this same turn of events, ultra-conservatism had also survived in Wittenberg. It soon became apparent that the Castle Church was to prove a stronghold in which was firmly entrenched

* The material is drawn chiefly from the excellent general introduction to Vol. XIX of the St. Louis Edition of Luther's Works, in which the editors incorporate many details to which the average reader has no ready access. The special introduction in Vol. XVIII of the Weimar Edition was also consulted, as were the Luther biographies of Koestlin and Kolde.

a spirit of reaction which stubbornly resisted all reform of worship, even the conservative and evangelical changes advocated by Luther. What was to make matters more difficult was the fact that here Luther found himself constrained to attack an institution which was very dear to the heart of Elector Frederic the Wise, the very man who had been such a staunch supporter at Worms and who had made the Wartburg a sheltering haven for Luther during the dangerous months that had followed.

The Castle Church, from whose very door Luther had launched his Ninety-Five Theses in 1517, was a monument to the piety of Frederic the Wise. It was a church without a regular congregation, since the Parish Church served the citizens of Wittenberg and the Augustinian Chapel the Monastery and the University. Only when the Elector was in residence at Wittenberg, was there a congregation which attended. Yet we are told that shortly before the above-mentioned resignations this church was staffed with a college of eighty-three clerics of various degrees. It was an endowed church, maintained by lavish grants made by the ancestors of Frederic, to which the Elector had made material additions. The original chapter consisted of fourteen prebendary canons, fourteen vicars, and a considerable number of lesser clergy. These were in charge of general devotions and a large program of special masses. To these Frederic added a "Lesser Choir" (in contrast to the other, the "Great Choir"), four priests, eight canons, and sixteen choirboys, whose sole assignment was to conduct devotional masses in honor of the Blessed Virgin. Another group was added by the Elector as late as 1519, this time for the purpose of a year-round program of masses in commemoration of the Passion of Christ. Luther declined to write the orders for this project on the ground that there was already too much ceremonial and ritual. Spalatin states that at this time the number of masses per year amounted to 11,039. The annual consumption of candles was over 35,000 pounds. Twenty-nine sets of sacramental vessels were required, two of them being of solid gold. No statistics are available as to the number of sacred vestments, except that more than a hundred sets were of the finest and heaviest silk damask, richly embroidered with gold. As late as 1522 Frederic was still adding to the almost incredible number of sacred relics (over 5,000, cf. *CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY*, December, 1943, p. 879) which were exhibited at this church and which made it a shrine that was visited by great crowds of pilgrims, particularly on the Day of All Saints (to whose memory the church was dedicated).

In view of these deeply rooted traits of character and this ingrained love of pomp and ritual the Elector was obviously going to be difficult when it came to applying the principles of the Reformation to this pet project. He had already proved that when the Deans of the two Choirs had complained of the manner in which their staffs had been depleted by the fact that some of their number had taken Luther's preaching to heart. For then Frederic had instructed them to make every effort to maintain

their full program of masses. Nevertheless, before the close of 1522 Luther began testifying against the system as well as against the personal conduct of at least some of the clergy of All Saints, calling the Castle Church a "Beth Aven," a House of Idols. After February, 1523, the discussions turned around a practical problem, that of finding a successor for the Dean of the Great Choir, who had died. Luther proposed Amsdorf, who, however, felt conscience-bound to declare that he would move for a reform of worship, and whose nomination was therefore not approved by the Elector. Luther had also addressed a letter to the Provost of the chapter, Justus Jonas (who was against the continuation of the old forms), and also to the entire chapter. In this he called upon them to remove those customs which were clearly an offense against the Gospel. When the matter was reported to the Elector by some who opposed this demand, Frederic declared that there was to be no change. A similar letter written by Luther in July met with the same fate.

Almost immediately Luther began to treat the matter from the pulpit of the Parish Church. Thus the issue was made public and became more urgent than ever. Now Jonas informed the Elector that he could no longer conform, would not even attend mass in the future, and that he was awaiting the decision of the Elector on his stand. Frederic's answer was that those canons who objected to serving in this capacity should resign. He seems to have modified this hasty decision, however, for on Michaelmas Day, lessons from the Old Testament were read in place of the mass for souls. Nor were there any resignations.

But Luther was not satisfied. Since many of the objectionable features were still retained, the settlement savored of compromise. It is at this time that he published his *Formula Missae*, apparently not merely yielding at last to the persistent entreaties of his friend Hausmann, but showing what in his judgment constituted an evangelical mass and what he was practicing in his own church in Wittenberg. Not only did he remove the secretive Canon of the Mass, the mysterious *Stillmesse*, as well as all references to the intercession of the saints and to their supposed merits, but he also stressed the need of preaching, in order that the people might receive the instruction of which they were so sorely in need. And yet he preserved the basic structure and the historic elements of the service. One marvels at the moderation of the man who in the midst of such a tense controversy did not permit himself to be carried away to extremes. But that his basic position had undergone no change is apparent from the way in which he entreats Hausmann in the closing paragraphs of this treatise not to be offended at the fact that the "sacrilegious Tophet" was still continuing at All Saints.

This was the state of affairs at the end of 1523. Matters might have remained in this unsatisfactory condition if a final crisis had not been precipitated by the action of one of the Deans who in the following year reverted to the Roman withholding of the cup in

the communion of a lay person. Luther not only protested immediately, but demanded a final decision from the entire chapter, indicating that if it were not forthcoming, he would resort to sterner measures. Since the chapter supported its Dean and appealed the case to the Elector, the issue was now squarely joined. The Elector requested a statement from Luther. Luther's answer seems to have been a document which was subsequently published under the title, *Concerning the Abomination of the Canon of the Mass*, in which he exposed the secret of the Canon and subjected it to his annihilating criticism. The Editors of the Weimar edition consider this a résumé of a sermon preached by Luther on Advent Sunday, 1524. This attack on the Canon of the Mass was made the substance of a final accusation against Luther by the clergy of All Saints, probably in a desperate attempt to retrieve the ground which they had lost. It was in vain, however, for Luther had the endorsement and support of the people, of the Augustinian Friars, and of the University. In a letter to the Elector the Dean of the Lesser Choir (not the one who was under fire) informed Frederic that he could no longer defend the old system, and a few days later the entire chapter signed the "New Order of Worship for the Castle Church at Wittenberg." The Elector gave silent consent. The New Order was inaugurated on Christmas Eve, 1524.

It had been a struggle that was not decided until the very last. More was at stake than we can determine at this distance. On the very day when Luther had preached his sermon against the Canon of the Mass, only four weeks before the end of the struggle, he had informed Spalatin that he would leave Wittenberg if the mass were to be retained. But now ultra-conservatism and liturgical reaction were disavowed, as extremism and radicalism had been before. The "Golden Mean" was emerging as the ideal of the Lutheran Liturgy.

This episode had an interesting and instructive sequel. The Elector Frederic died in May of the following year, 1525. He was succeeded by his brother John, "the Constant," the Confessor of Augsburg. There may be some connection between this change of rulers and the fact that the elaborate forms of worship at the Castle Church were simplified still more, e. g., by discontinuing the use of the rich and ornate Eucharistic vestments of which its college of clerics had such a plentiful supply. But in one respect there was no change. Every service that was held was still a mass. Although it had been agreed in the previous year that the Sacrament was to be celebrated only on Sundays and high festivals, and then only if there were communicants who desired it, and though, as has been said above, there was no regular congregation which belonged to All Saints, yet it would often happen that there was just one communicant. It soon became clear that a few die-hard members of the chapter had made this arrangement among themselves in order to insure that the service would always end with communion. Since this was obviously not a matter of ministering to a spiritual need, but rather of upholding a liturgical form, the

question was opened up once more, with the result that it was agreed that henceforth there were to be communion services at the Castle Church only when the Elector or some members of his Court were present and desired it. Otherwise the clergy of All Saints were to partake of the Sacrament in the Parish Church with the Wittenberg Congregation.

This might be interpreted as an indication of a petty and vindictive spirit on the part of Luther. But Koestlin correctly points out that an important principle was at stake. In his conservative revision of the Liturgy Luther had retained the thought that the service comes to its climax in the communion. But this should not be maintained as an empty form, nor should it be given the status of a mandatory requirement. For Luther the very greatness of the Sacramental Gift presupposed a genuine, unfeigned demand for its administration.

Our generation can learn much from this attitude of Luther. If the Liturgical Movement of our day will see its mission in reviving the interest of the Church in the Sacrament which has been entrusted to it, and in stimulating an increased desire in our congregations for the blessings which are thereby conferred upon us, and if the exponents of this movement will content themselves with patient Scriptural indoctrination and evangelical invitation and persuasion as their means for attaining this end, then they will certainly be rendering a service of the highest order. And if such efforts will lead to a situation where it becomes advisable to provide more frequent opportunities for communion, such steps will surely be welcomed by all concerned. But if the argument for a more frequent celebration of the Sacrament is to consist of attempts to discredit our present Sunday worship because it often is "merely" a service of the Word, if the communion is treated as a liturgical requirement which is needed either for the sake of completeness of the service or for the sake of ancient tradition, then we are on the way to the ritualism against which Luther protested so vigorously.

Dr. Hermann Sasse of Erlangen has summed it up in an article contributed to the latest issue of *Una Sancta*: "It has nevertheless become more abundantly clear that there can be no worship revival without a rediscovery of the Real Presence. The worshipers must know what they receive in the Holy Communion before they can desire it again. It is not the beauty of the Communion Liturgy that can renovate the celebration of Holy Communion, which has fallen into desuetude even in some Lutheran churches. That can be accomplished only by hunger and a thirst after that which is received at the Lord's Table. Only faith in the Sacramental Gift to which the Catechism testifies can renovate our celebrations of Holy Communion and therewith our services. Everything else will remain mere fruitless religious estheticism which one can have in other religions as well."

This recital of the events which transpired in Wittenberg during these critical years may serve another purpose, namely, toward an

evaluation of the relative merits of the two major liturgical works of Luther, his *Formula Missae* of 1523 and the *Deutsche Messe* of 1526. For some time it has been the fashion to praise the former at the expense of the latter. The Latin order is said to show Luther at his liturgical best, while the German is considered inferior by far. Strodach, in his introduction to Vol. VI of the Works of Martin Luther, considers it a pity that Luther did not stop with the *Formula*. He criticizes the *Messe* for what he calls "a forced and entirely overemphasized introduction of the congregational hymn, with its kindred versification of liturgical parts, — the poorest versification of which Luther was guilty." This harsh judgment is supported by Reed in his newly published book, though in considerably less strident terms. It would seem, indeed, that the events which lie between the writing of these two works were of such an irritating nature, particularly because of the stubborn character of the opposition, that they might well account for a drastic change in the attitude of Luther, amounting practically to an abandonment of his earlier moderate and conservative position.* That is the plausible theory upon which the foregoing judgment is based. But a closer examination will prove that the facts do not justify this conclusion.

It is a mistake to assume (as Strodach does) that the controversy with the clergy of the Castle Church came after the writing of the *Formula*. It has been shown above that this document was published shortly after the first phase of that bitter controversy had already been fought, at a time when Luther was still deeply dissatisfied because the entire settlement savored of compromise. Yet he did not permit these matters to affect his judgment when it came to setting down the principles for a proper and evangelical form of worship. Another period of strife followed, and led to his writing *Concerning the Abomination of the Canon of the Mass*. There Luther did relieve his mind of considerable accumulated tension. But when the *Messe* was written, the controversy was over. The outcome had been entirely to Luther's satisfaction. The new Elector was in complete sympathy with Luther's stand. The work that was done in preparation for the *Messe* was very much to Luther's liking. For now he was writing one after another of his immortal hymns, among them *A Mighty Fortress*, and Johann Walther and Conrad Rupff were combining their musical knowledge and training with Luther's native talent in fitting the ancient chants to the translated liturgical texts. Whether the metric versions of the Creed and the Sanctus are merely crude efforts, or whether the quality which offends the modern critic is one of boldness and vigor, is after all a matter of taste. It was the privilege of this writer recently to hear Luther's *Jesaia, dem Propheten, das geschah* (from the *Deutsche Messe*) sung by a well-trained choir. The impression it made on us was definitely not one of crudity, but of overpowering majesty.

* Strodach calls the *Deutsche Messe* a "break with the conservative past in spirit and in fact." (Works of Martin Luther, VI, p. 121.)

It is likewise a mistake to draw unwarranted conclusions from the fact that the *Messe* was entirely in German and made far-reaching provisions for granting the congregation an extensive active role in the service by the singing of hymns and liturgical parts. This is by no means an indication that Luther was yielding to a popular demand of which he really did not approve. Nor does it constitute a lapse from the more ideal liturgical plane of the *Formula*. On the contrary, the writing of a German mass in which the congregation should have a voice is merely the carrying out of a plan already formulated and announced in the earlier work. For in the concluding section of the *Formula Missae* Luther expresses the wish that as many of the songs as possible be in the vernacular, and that thus an increasing measure of participation in the service be assured to the congregation "UNTIL THE ENTIRE MASS SHALL BE MADE VERNACULAR." In the meantime he hoped that German poets might be moved to work out "pious poems" for this purpose.

In order to be properly understood, the two great liturgical writings of Luther should not be set against each other, one being favored at the expense of the other, but they should be recognized as what they truly are, successive steps in a carefully planned and clearly unified program for a sorely needed reform of worship.

A final matter for our consideration deals with the tendency which crops out in almost every liturgical movement, namely, to concern one's self unduly with punctilious matters of form, to make much of garb and ceremony, to bow before the authority of ancient tradition, and to neglect the underlying problem of doctrine. Lest we be misunderstood, let it be said that we do not mean to imply that every student of liturgy is preoccupied with such external and superficial matters, or that this study in itself will lead to such ill-conceived results. But if we draw one last comparison between the things which interested Luther and those which were favored by his ritualistic opponents, there can be no uncertainty as to our attitude toward these symptoms of traditionalism whenever and wherever they may arise. Nor can there be any doubt as to the direction in which such a movement leads. Dr. Sasse states it very clearly in the article which has already been mentioned: "If one does not take the doctrinal content of the Liturgy seriously, all liturgical restoration will remain an external thing, a mere borrowing of formulas, rites, and ecclesiastical forms which one can find done much better in a Roman Catholic church."

We are frank to say that much is being said and done in these matters that we do not like, much that is symptomatic of an unsound trend. Why must we copy the speech of Rome and speak of a "Tre Ore Service"? Why not use the vernacular, — good plain English words? Why adopt the Roman or High Church collar and vest for street wear? Why has it suddenly become "Blessed *

* Merriam-Webster, Def. 5: R. C. Ch. Beatified.

Martin Luther?" Why set one's self apart from the rank and file of Lutherans by an ostentatious genuflection and "signing" one's self in the presence of the Altar? Why do our conferences become "Retreats" and our books of prayer "Breviaries"? Why the persistent efforts to reintroduce the Elevation, or to emphasize "the sacrificial element" in the Sacrament? We know well that the prayers of praise and thanksgiving with which Christians receive the Body and Blood of their Lord *are* a sacrifice that is well-pleasing to God. But surely, we do not *offer* them with that thought in mind, for then they cease to be what they should always remain, truly humble expressions of gratitude for the undeserved mercy of God.

Why should we seek our liturgical ideals in the traditions of Rome when we have a better source? Let us hold fast to our good, sound, evangelical, Lutheran precedent. It demonstrates an ideal that follows the sober middle way. It is the ideal of the "Golden Mean," as Dr. Fuerbringer so aptly called it. That is our Lutheran heritage.



Theological Observer

An Important "Evangelical Church in Germany" Meeting.—January 9—13 Bethel in Westphalia, Germany, saw the dignitaries of the EKiD (Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland) assembled for an important session. The first convention of the body which had been called into existence last summer in Eisenach was to be held, officers had to be elected and the course had to be charted. There were two conflicting views as to the character which the new body should be given. One party, led by Pastor M. Niemoeller, was in favor of making the organization a Church, a denomination with all the functions and activities that belong to a Church in the accepted sense of the term. The other party, led by Bishop Meiser, sponsored the idea that the new body should be regarded and organized as a federation, in which the various churches forming the union would retain their independence and their character as separate churches, so that Lutherans would be and remain Lutherans and the Reformed, Reformed, and the bond connecting them would be a slender one, somewhat like the one that binds a number of denominations together in the Federal Council of Churches in America.

It is very difficult from this distance and as outsiders to obtain an absolutely clear and adequate view of what happened at Bethel. The reports say that Pastor Niemoeller was defeated in his efforts and that Bishop Meiser was successful. Dr. E. Theodore Bachmann, who is at present residing in Germany, states in *The Lutheran* of February 9 that Bishop Dibelius of Berlin was elected president over Dr. Niemoeller, whose present position is that of head of the Church of Hessen-Nassau. When the voting for the vice-presidency ensued, Bishop Lilje and Dr. Niemoeller were the prominent candidates, and Pastor Lilje was elected by a big majority. According to Dr. Bachmann's report, Dr. Niemoeller, whose group he terms as the non-confessional one, had as his supporters people who formerly spearheaded the struggle in Prussia against Hitler, and the so-called theological society which is described as a "radical Barthian organization." There were others who were in favor of electing Niemoeller, namely, people who desired to have EKiD established as a Church and not merely as a federation. Most of the Lutheran churches in the various zones, the Russian, the British, and the American, took the opposite view. They did not wish to lose their identity as Lutherans, and hence, we are told, they voted as they did. In his endeavor to interpret the debates that were held in Bethel, Dr. Bachmann says that the question which demands an answer is: Is the EKiD a Church or a federation? At the constitutional convention in Eisenach in the summer of 1948 the statement had been adopted "The Evangelical Church in Germany is a federation." This was not to the liking of many people following Dr. Niemoeller, who rather wished to see a grand ecumenical move-

ment started, uniting Lutherans and Reformed in one church body. But Dr. Bachmann says, "The confessional trend is re-asserting itself in Germany as elsewhere." It seems, then, if the reporter's view is correct, that the effort to wipe out the denominational lines was not successful. Dr. Bachmann holds that the organization of Lutherans called "Vereinigte Evangelisch-Lutherische Landeskirchen of Bavaria, Hannover, Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein, Brunswick, Thuringia, Mecklenburg, Hamburg," etc., won an important victory. It at least, so it seems, averted absorption of the Lutherans in a common Church which would be neither Lutheran nor Reformed. What the discussions will mean for sound confessional Lutheranism is a question that is asked with deep interest by all who love the Lutheran Zion.

Elsewhere in this issue of our journal, mention is made of the organization of the United Ev. Luth. Church of Germany (VELKD), at which Bishop H. Meiser of Bavaria was elected president. Are we here dealing with a Church? In this case one can at least speak of the bond of a common confession. A.

Bishop Aulen's Criticism of Harnack.—If anybody regards Harnack's negative conclusions propounded in his famous *Dogmengeschichte* unanswerable, let him read what Bishop Aulen of Sweden says concerning Harnack's positions. In 1932 the bishop wrote a treatise entitled *Die Dogmengeschichte im Lichte der Lutherforschung*, which appeared as the first volume in *Studien der Lutherakademie*, edited by Carl Stange of Goettingen (published by C. Bertelsmann of Guetersloh). Two students at Yale University now have translated this treatise into English, and their translation is given to the Church in the *Augustana Quarterly*; the October, 1948, issue brings the first two parts.

Our readers will be grateful for a brief report on the section that deals with Harnack. This historian, says the bishop, started out with contradictory principles. His *History of Doctrine*, to begin with, marked the end of a period and still belonged to it, the period of enlightenment. The liberal theology of which Harnack was an exponent was demolished by the religious-historical school, which was far away from the truth itself, but at least showed that Harnack's position lacked a true historical foundation. Another factor which helped to prove Harnack's views wrong was the Luther research of the last decades.

In his well-known book *Das Wesen des Christentums* Harnack indicates that the fundamental thesis for his history of doctrine was the view that the Gospel proclaimed by Jesus chiefly teaches the love of God, the eternal value of the human soul, and brotherly love of one person for the other—a position which essentially had been held by the old and long-ago-deposed Rationalists. But while Harnack ascribed this message to Jesus, he could not help seeing that the Apostles taught another Gospel, that of Christ the Redeemer and salvation by Him. Harnack had to notice that these two gospels were contradictory. Being loathe to admit this, he

began to vacillate and lost himself in ambiguities. He maintained that Christianity unfortunately by and by became Hellenized, and at the same time he praised this Hellenization of the Gospel as proclaimed by the Apostles. What on the one page he deplored, he eulogized on the other and called it an aid to Christianity. In other words, he was confused and did not clearly behold the difference between *agape* and *eros*, to use the terms of Nygren in regard to the Christian and the idealistic (or Greek) doctrines of redemption.

How this error operated to lead Harnack astray can be exemplified by his view of the Christological dogma of the ancient Church. He held that this dogma had been formulated not by Christ, but by the Greek spirit. But he overlooked that this dogma, with its teaching of the incarnation of the Son of God, was the direct antithesis of what the Greek spirit taught about God and what it held as to man's salvation, which it conceived as a movement from man up to God.

Another example one can find in Harnack's view of Luther, whom he regarded as having a dual character, on the one hand modern, on the other firmly clinging to the old "catholic" doctrines, especially in the field of Christology. It is not a very complimentary picture of the Reformer that results. But Harnack was wrong in evaluating Luther's position. The latter had grasped the significance of Christianity, that its chief feature is what it teaches on the unique relationship to God, and that this relationship is brought out in the doctrine of justification by faith. Modern Luther research shows that Harnack did not penetrate fully to Luther's understanding of Christianity—a finding which is not surprising when one considers that Harnack lacked insight into the real nature of the Gospel.

What we have briefly summarized is found in the first part of Bishop Aulen's treatise. The second part deals with the positions of the ancient Church (that is, the Church of the church fathers) and of the Church of the Middle Ages. A.

A Sane View Concerning the Union of Churches.—In the *Lutheran Outlook* for January the editor, Dr. J. A. Dell of the Theological Seminary of Capital University, Columbus, Ohio, writing in an editorial, acquaints his readers with some of the issues discussed in the Town Meeting of the Air of December 7, 1948. It will be recalled, on that occasion a public debate on the union of Christian churches was held in which the speakers were Doctors E. Stanley Jones, Truman Douglass, Walter A. Maier, and Governor L. Youngdahl of Minnesota. Dr. Jones, a missionary of the Methodist Church in India, is chief sponsor of the so-called Federal Union of Churches, advocating that the churches, without giving up their identity, form a union similar to that of the forty-eight States in our Republic; Governor Youngdahl seconded this project. Dr. Douglass, an official of the Congregational Christian

Churches, was in favor of merging the denominations, while Dr. Maier, member of the faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, on leave of absence and regular speaker on the Lutheran Hour, took the position that according to the Scriptures a God-pleasing union must rest on unity of doctrine and should be striven for by a joint study of the teachings of God's Word. Dr. Dell in his editorial examines in particular the plan proposed by Dr. Jones and finds that it is not very realistic. He concludes his discussion with this paragraph, which agrees with the position of Dr. Maier and voices our own convictions: "For us Lutherans it still seems that attempts to bridge over stark differences by ignoring those differences is the wrong way to go at it. Let us sit down and talk over our differences freely, with our Bibles in our hands, and pray over those differences, and try honestly to get somewhere. Pretending they do not exist will get us nowhere. And pretending that they do not matter is no better. A 'greatest-common-factor' religion would produce a big church maybe, but a mighty weak one. The strength of a church lies not in the number of adherents, but in the intensity of its devotion to its spiritual Foundation. As between one big weak church and a number of smaller strong churches, I would prefer the latter." A.

Continental vs. Anglo-Saxon Theology.— Under this heading the *Christian Century* (February 16, 1949) publishes a "preliminary reply to Reinhold Niebuhr" by Karl Barth, in which the Swiss theologian points out that the primary difference between European and American theology lies in their "divided view of the Bible." Barth writes: "I experienced at Amsterdam the opposition between 'Anglo-Saxon' and 'Continental' theology at a quite different point from that which Niebuhr has raised. After his exposition I certainly might very well have got excited about all the various manifestations of 'Anglo-Saxon' Pelagianism and semi-Pelagianism that I encountered there. That, however, did not happen. It was something quite different, apparently quite remote from the other complex of problems that struck me as dividing us. To put it quite simply, it was the different attitude to the Bible, from which we each take our start. That the Bible is, and must remain, the authority of the first rank was agreed, so far as I could see, on all hands. It seemed to me, however, that there was not agreement that the involved and exegetical attention [no doubt, this should read: there was no agreement that involved an exegetical attention] to the Bible as determinative of all theological thinking. I was struck by finding in our Anglo-Saxon friends a remarkable unconcern in this matter. They preferred to theologize on their own account, that is to say, without asking on what biblical grounds one put forward as it appeared to them to strengthen their own view, and without feeling any need to ask whether the words quoted really have in their context the meaning attributed to them (e. g., in Section I whether it was permissible to speak of certain encouraging movements and ad-

vances in the life of the churches as 'signs of the times'); or without regard to other passages in the same biblical writer which might, perhaps, limit or define more precisely the words quoted (e. g., in the Commission of the Work of Women in the Church the quotation of Galatians 3:28 without reference to I Corinthians 11, Ephesians 5, etc.).

"Lack of interest and disregard of biblical context were shown, even when these were of the first importance (e. g., to Romans 9—11 on the Jewish question, about which I had a conversation with an American professor of New Testament, in which I was told that it was a 'race' question in the same sense as the question of the Negro). It seemed to be a quite unfamiliar demand that in the church one must not simply speak in general terms of the 'mind of Jesus,' but must always fundamentally think and argue also from definite biblical texts and contexts, and when one put forward this demand, one had to be prepared to be written off as a 'biblicist' or 'legalist' or 'literalist'—a charge which Niebuhr has repeated once again in *Christianity and Crisis* in the issue of November 15, 1948. In this irresponsible attitude to the Bible, I find the explanation of the fact that I seemed to detect at Amsterdam in the thinking of the 'Anglo-Saxons' the absence of a whole dimension."

The reference of Karl Barth to the "text-context" method for determining ecclesiastical doctrine is all the more remarkable since in his *dogmatics* he himself does not follow the simple Scripture approach of orthodox theologians, but rather regards church dogma as rooted in the corporate experience of the Church. Does Barth's reproof of liberal Anglo-Saxon theology, which completely ignores Scripture as the sole *principium cognoscendi*, imply at least a tacit admission that the *Schriftprinzip* of the orthodox church teachers is fundamentally correct? Reinhold Niebuhr, in his reply to Barth (*Christian Century*, Feb. 23, 1949), readily admits the wide gulf between the two attitudes toward the Bible when he writes: "He [Barth] thinks that the Anglo-Saxon world does not take the authority of the Bible seriously enough, spinning its theologies and theories without reference to biblical texts and their context. We on the other hand charge the Continent with biblical literalism. . . . Continental thought, particularly as influenced by Barth, seeks to establish biblical authority over the mind and conscience of the Christian with as little recourse as possible to any norms of truth or right which may come to us out of the broad sweep of a classical, European or modern cultural history. In Anglo-Saxon thought there is a greater degree of commerce between culture in general and biblical faith." While Barth thus seems to be moving in the direction of orthodoxy, Niebuhr's attitude toward the Bible remains essentially Modernistic. Against Modernism, however, Continental theology can witness effectively only in case it fully acknowledges and employs the Bible as the sole source and rule of faith.

J. T. M.

Nicknames.—Under this heading, Dr. H. Hamann, in the *Australasian Theological Review* of September, 1948, which just now has come to our desk, writes a lengthy and timely editorial in which he emphasizes the deleterious effects of applying nicknames in the realms of politics and statecraft. The topic was occasioned by the frequent and unjust employment of nicknames by Russian Soviet officials to stir up hatred against the opposing democracies. But the western peoples themselves have not kept themselves free from offensive nicknames which in many cases were decidedly unfair. Even the name "Lutheran" has recently been drawn into the reprehensible strategy of fomenting strife. Dr. Hamann writes: "The word 'Lutheran,' we know, was first employed to classify adherents of the Reformation as heretics. In the course of the last war there was a perceptible tendency to make the name Lutheran, though on altogether different grounds, a name to arouse dislike and suspicion." He then quotes from the essay "On Nicknames" by the English essayist and critic William Hazlitt some very fitting statements, as, for example, the following: "Nicknames are the talismans and spells that collect and set in motion all the combustible part of men's passions and prejudices, which have hitherto played so much more successful a game, and done their work so much more effectually than reason, in all the grand concerns and petty details of human life, and do not yet seem tired of the task assigned to them. Nicknames are the convenient, portable tools by which they simplify the process of mischief, and get through their job with the least time and trouble. These worthless, unmeaning, irritating, envenomed words of reproach are the established signs by which the different compartments of society are ticketed, labelled, and marked out for each other's hatred and contempt. . . . A nickname carries the weight of the pride, the indolence, the cowardice, the ignorance, and the ill nature of mankind on its side. . . . 'Give a dog an ill name and hang him,' is a proverb. 'A nickname is the heaviest stone that the devil can throw at a man.' . . . Let a nickname be industriously applied to our dearest friend, and let us know that it is ever so false and malicious, yet it will answer its end; it connects the person's name and idea with an ugly association; you think of them with pain together, or it requires an effort of indignation or magnanimity on your part to disconnect them; it becomes an uneasy subject, a sore point, and you will sooner desert your friend, or join in the conspiracy against him, than be constantly forced to repel charges without truth or meaning, and have your penetration or character called in question by a rascal."

As we read these striking lines, we thought of the theological tensions now existing among many fellow believers who are unable to see eye to eye on moot points of doctrine and Christian practice. Under these circumstances nothing is more convenient and also more pleasing to the flesh than to apply the terms "conservative" and "liberal." Very often the conservative is even styled an "extremist," a "radical," an "ultra-confessional," an "isolationist,"

and the like, while the opponent comes in for such invectives as a "modernist," "Barthian," "collaborationist," and so forth. If, of course, a person proves himself to be a fanatic or a radical or a unionist, he should be dealt with according to the directions of God's Word. But to apply nicknames such as those just mentioned quickly and indiscriminately means not only to offend against the law of Christian love, but also to load down a brother with infamy and derision, and thus widen the gulf already existing. "Give a dog a nickname, and hang him." How true that is! Dr. Hamann begins his editorial with a note of apology for treating the subject in a theological journal. But the article is well placed; for nicknames applied unjustly and lovelessly in spite and hatred "form a dark and sinister group," as he very truly says. "They have an almost infinite capacity for mischief. They are liars, deceivers, assassins. It may be doubted whether any other words in human vocabularies have such great power for evil in the political, social, economic [and we may add, religious], life of man." J. T. M.

Roman Catholic Voices About Amsterdam.—*The Ecumenical Review*, a quarterly published by the World Council of Churches, succeeding *Christendom*, in its second number (Winter, 1949) devotes a number of articles to Amsterdam and its meaning for the Church. Not the least in importance is one reflecting by fitting quotations the Roman Catholic reaction to Amsterdam. Much of the comment is favorable, though the Catholic view of the Church is frankly stressed in many of the periodicals. The *Courrier de Genève* (August 21) remarks: "These Christians, according to the traditional Catholic doctrine, so often recalled by Monseigneur Besson, are part, in an unseen but still a genuine fashion, of the Church, the one Church of Christ. True, this unseen union does not appear to the outward eye, since they think themselves obliged to reject several of the signs by which it manifests itself; it is imperfect. . . . But it is a true and a profound union." *La France Catholique* (September 3) says: "The Holy Office has refused all authorisations. . . . Yet in a very large Catholic church in Paris a mass was said this very Sunday to pray for the grace and the illumination of the Holy Spirit upon the labors of Amsterdam. . . . The Church is not neglecting the doings in Amsterdam, and certainly her theologians will follow with close attention the labors of the Congress. She calls down upon it grace and illumination; she prays that its members may work ever nearer to the truth." In *Unitas* Father Charles Boyer published two articles about Amsterdam. In the first he said: "The infallible Church believes in Papal infallibility. What has been defined by the Councils and by the Popes is sacrosanct. A delegate from the Catholic Church to Amsterdam could only say, 'The universal Church, the Church of Christ you are looking for, does not need to be constituted, it is in existence; it is the Church of Rome, from which your fathers broke away, and which like a mother stands waiting for you!' . . . But does this mean that Catholics regard with indifference the

coming of Amsterdam? On the contrary, they devote to it their most brotherly attention. They are delighted to see non-Catholics taking up the question of union." *L'Alsace* (September 14) writes: "What use is a cheap unity that obscures the essential problems? And unity could not be the work of men; it must be the work of God. Karl Barth reminded the Assembly of this more than once." The Mexican monthly *Christus* has this to say: "If we show ourselves hostile and distrustful, that would be unjust and an assault against the designs of the Holy Spirit, who gives them life. . . . Our attitude must be to unite ourselves with them by invisible bonds of understanding, of mutual hope, and above all of confident prayer. They will wish to know the right road, and we who are already on the right road must procure for them the mercy of finding it." *La Croix*, after quoting Father Boyer's article in *Unitas*, adds this conclusion: "And since all roads lead to Rome, why should that of Amsterdam not put so many Christians 'on their way'? If they in humble prayer beseech the light of Heaven . . . beyond a doubt they will recognize the one true Church of Christ Jesus, and come at the last to join themselves with us in the bonds of a perfect love." These are only a few of the many quotations in the article, but they show that Rome is vitally interested in the World Council of Churches and explain also why this interest exists.

J. T. M.

Fame Not Measured by the Size of the Funeral Procession. In *The Church Builder* (November, 1948), which is issued bi-monthly, the Rev. F. R. Webber directs attention to the fact that the fame of great men is not always to be measured by the size of the funeral procession. He writes: "Two more men have been taken by death from the fast dwindling group of fine architects and craftsmen. They were Mr. Ernest W. Lakeman and Mr. John T. Austin. . . . He [Mr. Lakeman] came to America many years ago, and he became one of the group of high-class stained-glass men of our country. The gorgeous windows in the first bay of St. John the Divine, just inside the entrance of the cathedral, are his. These are the side windows. Many other noted churches contain his work. Mr. Lakeman died at the age of 65 in a hospital in Mount Vernon [New York]. Mr. John T. Austin died on September 17 at the age of 79. In 1889 he worked for the Farrand & Votey Co., successors to Hilborne and Frank Roosevelt, organ builders. In 1893 he became associated with Clugh & Warren, and in 1898 he organized the Austin Organ Co., Hartford, Conn. For fully half a century he built organs of high quality, and he was long recognized as one of the three top men of his calling. It was almost tragic that Mr. Lakeman's funeral was attended by only 14 people. It merely proves that the worth of a man is not to be judged by numbers. The funeral of Sir Wilfred T. Grenfell, the great medical missionary to Labrador, was attended by but a handful, while that of Gipsy Smith, whose perfervid pulpit oratory stirred congregations that numbered as many as 30,000,

was attended by even fewer. The things that these men accomplished speak for them, *and their fame is not to be measured by the size of the funeral procession*" [italics our own]. The paragraph has perhaps little theological value if we take theology in the sense of something intellectual or academic. Nevertheless, since the Lutheran Church has always appreciated the merit of church art, it may be fitting for us to note the passing of the great artists, of whom the editorial speaks, in this theological journal. But there is a special lesson, too, in the final statement of Editor Webber. As we read it, we were made to think of the many small funeral processions which we have witnessed in connection with the burial of aged pastors who for many years had been cut loose from the parishes which they had served and who, having lived in large cities after retiring, were followed to their last resting place by only a sprinkling of friends. Fame can certainly not be measured by the size of funeral processions! The comfort that God's Word gives to His saints lies not in large funeral processions, but in the fact that "their works do follow them" (Rev. 14:13). J. T. M.

Nebraska Legislative Committee Seeks Church Property Interpretation.—A committee of the Nebraska legislature has recommended a new interpretation of State laws covering methods

by which religious groups may acquire, hold, and convey property. The committee listed four types of religious societies for legal purposes: (1) The unincorporated church, parish, congregation, or association which may not recognize some superior church authority. (2) The single church, parish, or congregation which is incorporated as an entity which is legally independent of any superior denominational organization or authority. (3) The single church, parish, or congregation which is incorporated as a part of, and subject to the authority of, some denominational organization having general supervision over it. (4) The synod, conference, diocese, presbytery, or other ecclesiastical court of body which is incorporated and which exercises jurisdiction over any two or more local churches, parishes, or congregations.

"Since churches are organized under the laws of the state, and since disputes over property rights frequently arise," the legislative committee said, "it is sometimes necessary for the courts to inquire into church affairs." Lack of clear understanding of the different types of religious societies was blamed by the committee for many irregularities involving property ownership. Committee members predicted that if their recommendations were followed, much present confusion over laws affecting religious groups would be avoided.

R. N. S.

Religious Conditions in France.—France has a population of about forty million people. How many of them go to church? This question is discussed in an interesting article appearing in the winter number of *Religion in Life*, a "Christian quarterly." The writer is Rev. Howard Schomer, who is described as a "resident delegate" of the American Congregational churches in the

French mountain village of Chambon-sur-Lignon. The picture which he draws is rather alarming. He states that a least 32 million of the French people are not active church members in any denomination. Most of the people we suppose were baptized, and probably confirmed in the Roman Catholic Church, but they do not show any interest in the services and the work of any particular religious group. But while the great majority of the people do not manifest an interest in religion, they cannot be said to be open opponents of the work the churches are doing. We draw the conclusion that the French people, as far as the majority is concerned, are apathetic or indifferent with respect to religious beliefs. Wherever one travels in France, Pastor Schomer says, one meets statues of saints and shrines; the people have these religious memorials before their eyes constantly, but they are not influenced by them. He lists four main reasons why he thinks French people would rather see God pass out of existence. One is that they are given to heavy drinking, the second refers to the life of sensuality they either lead or would like to lead, the third one can be summarized as a love of money, the fourth is intellectual opposition to the Roman Catholic Church, which all too many people identify with the Christian religion itself.

Submitting statistics, Rev. Schomer states that a certain Roman Catholic estimated that the number of Catholics who are loyal to their Church is not more than seven million at present. The number of live and active Protestants is said to be 700,000. Another writer interested in statistics stated that in France there are not more than three million loyal Catholics. There are 15,000 active priests and 700 active Protestant pastors. There is no doubt that paganism is flourishing in France, which is usually regarded as a Christian country.

The remainder of the article speaks of an approach between Protestants and Catholics, which, however, is very tenuous, and of work in which Calvinistic churches are engaged. A.

"America" (Roman Catholic) Replies to Bishop Oxnam.—To acquaint our readers with the reasoning of the Roman Catholic hierarchy when attacked by the group of Protestants whose chief spokesman is Bishop Oxnam, we reprint a page from *America* of February 12:

"In Washington, D. C., on January 27, Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam of the Methodist Church delivered himself of one of his characteristic 'blasts' at the Catholic Church in America.

"All these fulminations were stirred up in the Bishop's mind (or imagination) by the debate over the Supreme Court's *McColum* decision of March 8, 1948. The Court declared unconstitutional the practice of letting religious groups hold classes for public-school children on a voluntary basis once a week, on school property and during the regular school day. The Court decided that this practice, going on since 1914, 'breached' the 'wall of separation' between Church and State and hence violated the First

Amendment — although nothing is said therein about 'separation of Church and State.'

"We will summarize Bishop Oxnham's charges and deal with each:

"1) *Protestants believe in the separation of Church and State in America; Catholics do not.*

"A great many Protestants, as well as Catholics, reject the absolute separation of Church and State as being neither Christian nor American. Twenty-four nationally known Protestant bishops, ministers and theologians signed a protest against the McCollum decision, including these five bishops: James C. Baker, president of the Council of Bishops of the Methodist (Oxnham's) Church, Francis J. McConnell, a predecessor of Oxnham in N. Y., and Edward L. Parsons of California, William Scarlett of Missouri and Angus Dun of Washington, D. C., Episcopalians. Ten nationally eminent Protestant theologians, the secretary of the General Council of the Congregationalist Christian Churches and the executive secretary of the American Committee for the World Council of Churches also protested the decision. Many others could be named. When Bishop Oxnham pretends that 'Protestants' are fighting 'Catholics' on this issue he is being less than honest.

"2) *This separation is the 'bastion' of religious liberty.*

"This is not true. Canada and Great Britain give considerable financial help to all sectarian schools. Switzerland lets religious groups run classes in public schools. Other democratic countries have a similar system. It doesn't 'rob' them of 'religious liberty,' does it? Since 1945, our Federal Government has allotted tens of millions of dollars to sectarian colleges for the education of World War II veterans. Have we 'lost' religious liberty since 1945? Only Russia has absolute separation — and it has no religious liberty.

"3) *American culture is at stake in this struggle.*

"Bishop Oxnham means his concept of American culture is at stake. He is fighting to establish by law a form of anti-Catholic bigotry which all Protestant countries have had in the past (see 'Election in Northern Ireland,' p. 503 this issue), including America. We have overcome it, but the Bishop doesn't like the idea of Catholics in the United States getting a fair deal, especially in the field of education.

"4) *The November statement of the American Catholic hierarchy attacking secularism in American life and education is a 'smokescreen behind which the hierarchy forms its forces to secure public funds for the support of parochial schools.'*

"Catholics don't need a 'smokescreen.' When they think they have a just claim to public funds they say so, like all other Americans. We are saying so now in Washington (Am. 1/29, pp. 455 to 457). The Bishop's imagination is getting the better of him.

"5) *The assault on religious liberty stems from Catholic clerics*

(millions of the laity 'must' disagree with the stand of the hierarchy).

"Extremely unlikely. Our laity do not like paying twice for the education of their children, any more than any Americans like to pay double. This is an old game, trying to split the clergy and the laity. But the Bishop has chosen a mighty poor issue on which to do it. Our laity know the score on this one. The cost of sustaining our schools falls entirely on them.

"6) *Our bishops must be following a strategy dictated in a 'foreign capital,' because '... it is inconceivable that the hierarchy would have risked such an ill-conceived attack upon the principle of the separation of Church and State if the decision had been made by men trained in the American tradition of freedom.'*

"Amazing. Where did the twenty-four Protestants mentioned above get their notion of objecting to the McCollum decision—from the Vatican? Where did the Illinois Supreme Court get its ideas, which the Supreme Court reversed? Where did the editor of the *Journal* of the American Bar Association get his legal objections? And Dr. Edward S. Corwin of Princeton? And Justice Reed of the Supreme Court? It just happens that some Catholic priests and laymen know enough American history, political science and law to see that the McCollum decision is full of holes. As Bishop Oxnham seems to be quite innocent of such knowledge he very wisely dodges the historical and legal issues.

"7) *'The Roman Catholic Church is opposed to our system of public education.'*

"A chestnut. Rev. Robert I. Gannon, S. J., in his *After Black Coffee*, and Rev. Allan P. Farrell, S. J. (*Am.* 10/5/46. p. 15), show a proper appreciation of the American public school system. Thousands of Protestants criticize it as we do, on religious grounds, for example, a great number of Protestant teachers in the Religious Education Association.

"8) *Our bishops are trying to foist on America a 'culture alien to the traditions of a free people,' a 'totalitarian' system like that of the Middle Ages.*

"It's very 'old hat' to end up a diatribe on the Catholic Church in America by harking back to the Middle Ages. Catholics don't idealize them, by a long shot. But calling them 'totalitarian' must seem amateurish to historians. Catholics, and Protestants, too, want neither a revival of medievalism, which had not yet developed a mature concept of the State, nor Bishop Oxnham's version of a Protestant-dominated culture."

The writer in *America* is very careful not to state what the attitude of the Pope and the Roman Catholic hierarchy really is toward religious liberty. A.

Nevada Bill Would Make Courts Reconciliation Agency.—A bill introduced in the Nevada assembly at Carson City, Nevada, would require State courts to make strong efforts to effect a reconciliation between couples seeking a divorce.

The measure, in addition to requiring judges to attempt reconciliations by conferences with plaintiff and defendant—either singly or jointly—would also obligate the jurists to read the following statement to the man or woman or both:

"You have asked that in due process of law your marriage be ended. You have asked in effect that surgery be performed on you. Not surgery of the body, but surgery nevertheless. For some it is social or financial surgery. For others it is emotional surgery, and for them there is no anesthetic.

"Perhaps you need this surgery. For those who do, the State of Nevada has laws which are among the most liberal in the nation. However, it is not the intention of this State to grant divorce unless such action is for the good of the individuals concerned. For that reason we presume to address you.

"The old saying, 'marry in haste and repent at leisure,' may be turned around and applied to divorce. Many who obtain divorces live to regret it, especially those who make their decisions in haste or anger, or under the compulsion of physical desire.

"Even if you think your marriage was a mistake, remember that a divorce may also be a mistake. A divorce does not erase the effects of a marriage. If you do not believe that, just try to unscramble an egg.

"You are a different person now from the person you were before you married. For one thing, you are older. Let us hope that you are also more mature emotionally. Pleasures and people who appealed to you years ago might quite likely bore you now.

"Most persons who obtain divorces either marry again or wish to. But do not forget that the 'old gang' you used to go around with is different now.

"Even if you could get them together again, things would no longer be the same. That is especially true if you have been married a long time. The sweetheart you might have married may not be either willing or able to marry you now.

"If you are a woman, you should be aware of the man who would lure you away from a good home and desert you later. It has happened many times. You may not think it could happen to you, but if he is the sort of man who would court you when you were married to somebody else, how do you know he would not court somebody else when and if he is married to you?

"In spite of all these objections, we recognize that divorce is sometimes necessary. That is what our laws and courts are for. But before you take the final step, may we suggest that you talk your problems over with someone who is especially trained to help you?

"Usually a professional person, who can look at your problems dispassionately, is better able to advise you than one of your friends or relatives who may be emotionally involved through affection for you.

"A psychologist, psychiatrist or psychotherapist who specializes in marriage counselling can sometimes work wonders. There are institutes of marriage relations devoted entirely to solution of problems such as yours.

"The services of any of these people are seldom more, and usually less, than the legal costs of a divorce. Your attorney, if he follows the ethics of his profession, will prefer to earn his fee by effecting a reconciliation rather than a divorce." — RNS.

Tulsa Builds Modernistic Churches to Escape Gothic Influence.—Realizing the trend of the times, the houses of worship in Tulsa, Okla., the nation's oil capital, are rapidly becoming studies in contemporary architecture. To a few it is radical and "unfitting," but to the vast majority of congregations, true dignity and beauty can be found in the 20th-century churches they are building. Gone are vaulted ceilings and drafty floors, along with the hard, wooden pews and stained-glass windows. Believing that houses of God must be constructed and equipped for the needs of all people, Tulsa's churches have substituted air-conditioning, sponge-rubber theater seats, block-glass windows and even audiophone equipment for the hard-of-hearing.

The movement to pull church architecture from the doldrums of the Gothic period was first begun in Tulsa in 1929 with the construction of the nationally famous \$1,500,000 Boston Avenue Methodist Church. The "Oilmen's Church" attracts thousands of tourists yearly and was organized in 1893 by a young circuit-riding preacher, the Rev. E. B. Chenoweth. Arriving on the overland stage from Colorado, the minister moved his family to a dugout home a few miles from "Tulseytown" and then began organizing a congregation that very day. Today, the fabulous cathedral, built 36 years later on the exact location of the Chenoweth dugout, is considered by experts to be one of the most perfect examples of American architecture. Recently, another Tulsa church has attracted considerable attention throughout the State because of the modernity in its design. The Cincinnati Avenue Christian Church is unique among churches in the Southwest in that there are no windows.

Architect Frederick Vance Kershner reports that the edifice will be thoroughly American in character and realistic in its rigid economy. Termed a "simple mass of masonry," the architect explained, "the church has been stripped of luxurious trappings and ornate embellishments once believed to be necessary to proper ecclesiastical design." True to line and honest in the use of its materials, the building creates a calm spiritual atmosphere. It is a large rectangular block of masonry, embraced by a low, one-story wing. Pastor James Rutherford, who organized the church 13 years ago, believes the entire building is "indicative of the strength and solidity of Christianity." Constructed to shut out street noises, the church front is a 25-foot solid white concrete wall. The building has solid glass doors, air-conditioning, a glass

room for mothers with crying babies, and a special section in the auditorium equipped with audiophones for the hard-of-hearing. An unusual feature of the church is a baptistry constructed entirely of glass, with under-water lights to add to the beauty of the baptismal service. Cincinnati Avenue's attendance is over 1,000 each Sunday. The Bible school ranks among the first 20 Christian churches of the nation in attendance, with 550 reporting weekly for instruction.

Another departure from traditional church design can be found in Tulsa's East Side Christian Church. Fast becoming a point of civic pride, the church is a study in brick and glass. The entire plant is built along low, curving lines. The entrance is completely round and is tasteful as well as exceptional in appearance. Termed the largest church dedication in State history, East Side Christian was officially opened Jan. 9, after week-long services brought approximately 10,000 persons from the city and Northeastern Oklahoma to view it. The Rev. Paul McBride announced that the building, which cost more than \$255,000, embodies modern principles found in few churches in this region. A sound-proof broadcasting studio, a projection room for the showing of films and a rare three-dimensional photograph of Christ are but a few of the church's possessions. Construction is scheduled to start soon on a \$100,000 "Chapel of Chimes," to be built adjacent to the church. The chapel will be used for weddings, silent meditation, and funerals.

Modern architecture has not been confined solely to the Methodist and Christian (Disciples) churches of Tulsa. To the amazement of many the city's newest Catholic convent called on California when it decided to build a home for the sisters of the Church of St. Mary Magdalene. Low-slung, rambling, and splashed with color and sunlight, the convent is recognized as the most modern west of the Mississippi River. A two-story, nine-room structure of brick and wood, the convent boasts picture windows, a sun-deck, screened porch and drying yard. The living room is decorated in colors of chartreuse and red, with blond mahogany wood prevailing throughout the house. The convent entrance is flanked by glass bricks. Father James McNamee lives in a rectory similar to the convent in style, design and materials. His living room contains a fireplace that extends across an entire wall. "My opinion is that the Catholic Church is going to move into more modern building trends for the very simple reason that it is about one-half the cost of old-style Gothic cathedrals," Father McNamee said. The rectory, convent, and church at present make up three legs of a future triangular plant. A school will be erected soon to connect the three buildings into one unit. The school will be one-story high. Each classroom will be an individual unit and the walls will be constructed chiefly of glass to allow the greatest possible amount of sunlight to enter the rooms. — RNS.

Turkish Government Pledges Liberty of Conscience.—Turkey's new government has issued a statement of policy on the religious issue pledging that it will hold liberty of conscience "sacred." The statement added, however, "we shall not tolerate religion to be made the instrument of politics or private interest." In this connection, the statement indicated the government would submit measures to parliament to prevent religion from becoming such an instrument. "The inviolability of liberty of conscience and thought is a basic principle," the policy statement said. "But if convictions and thoughts take the character of instigation and propaganda forbidden by law, this will be considered as the gravest crime." In another part of the statement the government said it would "remain faithful" to the principle that the teaching of religion is optional. "We shall duly prepare the means and possibilities," it said, "that will allow citizens to make use of their right to give religious instruction to their children." "But one should in no case imagine that we are going to part from the principle of secularism." The new government is headed by Shemsettin Gunaltay, who was named premier by President Ismet Inonu following the resignation of Premier Hasan Saka.

RNS

Lutherans Brief Items from Religious News Service

Forty-two new missions were established in the United States last year by eight church bodies participating in the National Lutheran Council. The Division of American Missions revealed that its thirty regional home mission committees had investigated 312 potential mission fields and had assigned 106 fields for occupancy, of which forty-two were actually established. In addition, fifteen fields were cleared for relocation of congregations.

Miss Rachel K. McDowell, who retired on January 1 from her post as religious news editor of the *New York Times*, received an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Valparaiso University.

More than 1,146,000 volumes have been sent overseas during the past five years by the Lutheran Book Depository operated by the National Lutheran Council.

The Rev. John Simmons, United Lutheran Church pastor who believes that politics "is everybody's business," has resigned his pulpit to become a candidate for mayor of Minneapolis.

Bishop Hans Meiser of Bavaria was elected "*Leitender Bischof*" of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany at its general synod in Leipzig. The executive leadership of the United Church will consist of five elected members, including Bishop Meiser. Others named were Bishop Hugo Hahn of Land, Saxony, who was also chosen as deputy to the presiding bishop; Dr. Bloetz of Hamburg, chairman of the general synod; Dr. Ido Hertrick, high church councilor of Hamburg; and Dr. Lotz, high church

councilor of Eisenach. Discussing the reorganization of the church, Bishop Meiser asserted that "not all traditions should be sanctioned" and that "reforms are needed." He called for efforts to establish better relations with Lutheran Free Churches and for "honest and straightforward relations with EKID." The general synod opened with a reception at which the newly elected president of EKID, Bishop Otto Dibelius of Berlin, brought greetings. Other speakers included representatives of the Soviet Military Administration, the Roman Catholic Church, the World Council of Churches, and Christian Democratic Union of Saxony. In response, Bishop Meiser stated that the formal organization of VELKD "fulfills the dream of all Lutheran Christians."

The Inner Mission, a strong Pietistic group within the Danish Lutheran State Church, will boycott the three women ministers ordained last year by Bishop Hans Ollgaard of Odense. Pastor Christian Bartholdy, chairman of the Inner Mission, announced the group's position in an article published in *Inner Mission Tidings*.

Employment in the United States for more than 200 professors who are now living in displaced-persons camps in Europe is being sought under a co-operative project of the National Lutheran Council and the National Lutheran Educational Conference. At the closing session of the Educational Conference's 35th annual convention in New York, its 45 member schools—28 four-year colleges, 12 seminaries, and 5 junior colleges—were urged, if they can, to provide academic positions for the refugees.

Other Protestants in America

Protestant churches of Omaha gained 6 per cent in membership last year. The Rev. W. Bruce Hadley, executive secretary of the Omaha Council of Churches, said that during the same period the city's population had increased by about 2 per cent.

Members of the Glendale Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Glendale, Calif., contributed more than one quarter of a million dollars in tithes and offerings in 1948, with an average per capita donation of \$190. The year's funds reached \$257,478.

Creation of a constitution for the establishment of local "United Protestant Churches" has been announced by the Washington and Northern Idaho Council of Churches. District leaders of seventeen denominations are now engaged in final editing of a charter of faith which is believed to be unique for Protestants.

A general evangelistic campaign in the Sunday schools of the Methodist Church has been planned for the pre-Easter season. The campaign will include home visitation, training classes for church membership, and preparation on the part of Sunday school officers and teachers for bringing pupils into church membership. The drive is part of an effort to win one million church members through the Sunday school by 1952.

A program of religious instruction from grammar school through college, to be given by educators "with large sympathy for the churches" but not by clergymen, was urged in New York at the annual meeting of the Association of American Colleges. Dr. Kenneth I. Brown, president, speaking before 600 college presidents and other educators, denounced "nationalistic secularism" as America's worst enemy and asked that the public schools teach religion as "a part of the American heritage."

Disciples of Christ in the United States and Canada number 1,724,905, a gain over last year of 21,895, according to the 1948 yearbook. At present there are 7,877 Disciples churches in the United States and Canada and 8,157 ministers. Offerings last year totaled \$13,124,288.87, a gain of \$2,747,744.52 over the previous year.

Boston University's proposed new chapel will have windows containing representations of four historic doorways connected with religion. The doorways are those of: Solomon's Temple, Jerusalem; St. Peter's Basilica, Rome; Wittenberg Cathedral, to which Luther nailed his Theses; and City Road Chapel, London, built by John Wesley.

Formation of a Vacation Religious Education Fellowship, through which leaders of vacation church schools of different denominations and areas will exchange ideas and materials, was announced in Columbus, Ohio, by Ruth Elizabeth Murphy of Chicago, director of vacation religious education for the International Council of Religious Education. Coaching conferences and community institutes on a State-wide basis will be held throughout the country this spring to train leaders for the nation's 5,000,000 boys and girls who will attend vacation schools this summer.

Dr. Irving Shaver, director of weekday religious education for the International Council of Religious Education, said in a speech before the council in Columbus, Ohio, that divorcing religion from education may lead to the development of a "religion of the state increasingly official, plainly sectarian, and a dangerous competitor of religion as interpreted and propagated by the churches," and warned that separation of religion from education might result in the creation of an "all competent" state that would ultimately destroy individual rights and freedoms.

Addressing the International Council of Religious Education in Columbus, Ohio, Dr. Elbert M. Conover, director of the Interdenominational Bureau of Church Architecture, stated that one of the biggest booms in Protestant church building is now in progress in the United States. A total of \$65,000,000 in church building is under way and construction amounting to \$700,000,000 is scheduled to start in the near future.

A total of 2,932,682 Bibles, New Testaments, and Scripture portions were distributed in China during 1948. During the coming year the American Bible Society faces a need in China for 2,080,000 Scripture volumes.

EKiD

Dr. Martin Niemoeller has agreed to serve as representative from the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKiD) to the World Council of Churches, and he has also accepted the post of director of EKiD's foreign office.

Delegates to the general synod of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKiD) applauded addresses calling upon the church to be "a living witness of its own teachings" in order to enlist the sympathy and support of the people. A leading lay delegate, Socialist Mayor Metzger of Darmstadt, declared that "the churches made many mistakes during the proletarian movement of the past one hundred years," thus giving rise to "an anti-religious attitude among workers, based on the belief that the churches were living in a ghetto of well-fed bourgeois self-complacency." Pastor Eugen Gerstenmaier, chairman of *Hilfswerk*, called attention to "the terrible increase of egotism and debauchery," which he said, prevails among Western Zone Germans and which "foreigners regard with helpless astonishment."

Bishop Otto Dibelius of Berlin was elected chairman of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKiD). He succeeds Bishop Theophil Wurm of Wuerttemberg. The EKiD was formed at Treysa shortly after the war and comprises Lutheran, Reformed, and United Churches in Germany.

Bishop Otto Dibelius of Berlin said that he would work toward making the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKiD) a more influential factor in the nation's life. "Bishop Wurm's greatest achievement," Bishop Dibelius said, "was to lead the church out of a narrow privacy into active participation in public life. My intention is to strengthen this tendency, and use the EKiD as an instrument to exert influence in political, social, and public affairs generally."

Roman Catholics

More than 240 new missionaries have been assigned to foreign mission territories by the Society of the Divine Word during the last three and one half years. According to general headquarters of the Roman Catholic missionary order in Rome, the missionaries were sent to replace losses in personnel caused by the war, especially in New Guinea and the Dutch East Indies.

Osservatore Romano, official Vatican newspaper, denounced the newly formed Christian Progressive Movement in Italy as a Communist attempt to "weaken Italian Catholicism." The move-

ment, which includes the Christian Social Party, the Christian Peace Movement, the Movement of Independent Catholics, and smaller groups, claims to seek freedom of conscience, tolerance for all creeds, and radical reforms for the attainment of justice and charity.

According to 1948 figures there are about 396 Catholic publications with a circulation of 13,495,580. Included in the list are weekly diocesan newspapers, several daily papers, national circulation magazines for special groups and organizations, magazines of individual religious orders, mission publications, and some non-diocesan weeklies.

The Roman Catholic population of England and Wales has increased by 120,000 from 1946 to 1947, according to the 1949 Catholic directory. The estimated total Catholic population of England and Wales is given as 2,000,648.

Archbishop J. Francis A. McIntyre of Los Angeles has begun a campaign to raise \$3,500,000 for the construction of fifteen new Roman Catholic elementary and high schools in his archdiocese. Archbishop McIntyre hopes the money will be raised by March 5.

Others

Dr. Frantisek Linhart, newly appointed dean of the John Hus Theological Faculty of Charles University in Prague, is a Communist as well as a member of the Church of the Czech Brethren. In his inaugural address, Dr. Linhart, a party member since November, 1947, asserted that the teachings of Christ were in accord with the materialistic desire for better social conditions and that Marxists are not at odds with the Church over fundamental precepts.

A group of twenty-seven Japanese war criminals who recently sailed from Shanghai for Tokyo were baptized as Christians shortly before they left. Among them were ten former high-ranking officers in the Imperial Army.

A \$50,000 mosque, under construction since July, 1947, is nearing completion in Sacramento, Calif. The mosque, which will accommodate more than 1,000 persons, is being built by a number of Sacramento Valley residents who came to the United States from Pakistan.

Major philanthropic agencies in this country will seek contributions amounting to \$2,633,926,057 during 1949.



Book Review

All books reviewed in this periodical may be procured from or through Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis 18, Mo.

Resurgence of the Gospel. By T. A. Kantonen. The Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia. 232 pages, 5×7½. \$3.00.

The author pleads for "the resurgence of the Gospel," that is, for a recapture of the "real Luther and the reinterpretation of Luther's great principles for modern man." These principles are justification by faith, the sole authority of the Word, and the universal priesthood of believers.

The significance of this book lies in its "existential" approach. The author considers Luther one of the greatest "existential" thinkers of history (p. 35) and Luther's three principles as the best formulation "of an existential theology." To present Luther's theology as a "dynamic," existential theology is, in our opinion, both the strength and the weakness of the book. Existential theology as represented in Barthianism has brought us face to face with an entirely new battery of terminology: encounter, dialectics, crisis, dynamics, relevancy, *in actu*, existential moment. This terminology, though somewhat bewildering at first, can be made meaningful. Existential theology has indeed made a tremendous contribution to modern thinking, inasmuch as it vehemently attacked the barrenness of liberal theology and of dead orthodoxy and insists that theology must be personal and dynamic. The author shows that Luther was an "existential" thinker in the sense that for him religious facts were not only objectively true, but actually implied an "encounter." The reader will find many refreshing and challenging statements as he recaptures the dynamic of Luther's theology, and is again convinced that there is nothing static or quietistic about Luther's theology. But one must be careful lest one is carried away by the author's plea to "go beyond the dry and ponderous systems of our orthodox Scholasticism to Luther himself for guidance and inspiration" (p. 36). In making Luther an "existential thinker" the pendulum may swing all the way to Barthian dynamics and existentialism, with its one-sided emphasis of the subjective "encounter," the "event," the "crisis," and the resultant loss of objective truth. We fear that the author makes Luther's existentialism too "existential." The author states (p. 35 f.) that the Augustana's definition of God (There is one divine essence which is called and is God) "is not Luther's handwriting," because Luther always stood *coram Deo* and could therefore never speculate about God, but could only respond to God, because in Luther's language "God has no divinity where there is no faith" (p. 35 f.). While Luther's doctrine of God was "existential," he did not lose sight of—which for want of a better word we might call—the objective truth, and the author overlooks that Luther said: "*Augustana mea est*," because it is based on Luther's Schwabach and Marburg Articles (cp. St. Louis Edition, Vol. XVI, p. 564; XVII, p. 1940). The author rightly inveighs against an interpretation of Luther's doctrine of justification which is no more than an intellectual scheme. Luther would say, The story of the Prodigal Son must become *my* "encounter," an "event" for *me*. True, "justification is to be experienced in terms of individual regeneration"

(p. 59). But this "experience" rests on an "objective" truth. My justification in the *hic et nunc* and the resultant tensions, expressed in Luther's pithy phrase *iustus simul peccator* (pp. 50-57), is indeed "existential," a personal experience. But we must also maintain the objective character of justification apart from sanctification. The question is not an either/or, but both/and. We must indeed "seek to avoid the spectator-attitude and to keep alive the 'existential' character of justification as an actual encounter" (p. 73). But in doing this we dare not lose sight of the factual, objective character of the Gospel. Apparently the author wishes to maintain the objective character (p. 72), but we feel that he does not stress it sufficiently, especially in view of the fact that he states that "faith not only rests upon the objective fact 'Christ died for us'; it is constantly renewed and energized by the Christ who lives within us" (p. 79). We therefore cannot agree with the author when he says that Melancthon and later dogmatists viewed justification as "a purely forensic affair, dealing not with men at all but only with the relation between God and man," and taking place "not in the human heart but in the judgment hall of God" (p. 58).

The existential approach of the author is evident particularly in the chapter on the Word, where the author pleads for a "dynamic inspiration," not a "*Deus dixit*," but a "*Deus loquens*" concept (p. 121). The author states that he does not agree completely with Luther's views on "canonics," but hopes that all will take seriously Luther's "appeal from the letter of the Bible to the Lord of the Bible" (p. 119). The author's contention is that Luther re-discovered the Christo-centric Bible and that this emphasis is needed in our day against a Fundamentalism which identifies the Word of God with the text of the Bible (p. 113). Does the author when speaking of the dynamics of the Bible have in mind what we generally call the means of grace, more specifically, the efficacy of the Word, or is he writing as an existentialist for whom the Bible has "the permanent possibility of an encounter with God" (p. 127) and for whom the Word of God is the Word only when it addresses *me*? We cannot understand his argumentation for the categorical denial of the inerrancy of Scriptures unless he has in mind that the Word of God has relevance only *in actu* and not *in statu*. He states: "Protestant theology has found itself in the dilemma of either starving on the empty husks of static intellectualism which its traditional orthodoxy inherited from a decadent scholasticism or else selling its birthright for the pottage of more up-to-date secular science and philosophy. Fundamentalism has followed the former course, modernism the latter. Neither is able to satisfy the reawakened spiritual hunger of our tragic day" (p. 127). The Fundamentalist view, if the author has in mind the Lutheran doctrine of verbal inspiration, is not correctly presented when he says: "The Word of God in its central and proper sense is not synonymous with the Christian proclamation, but with the written documents of the Old and New Testament now contained in canonical Scripture" (p. 130). This is a one-sided presentation. The view presented in the Formula of Concord (for example, p. 903, 55) and found in all Lutheran theology does not oppose a dynamic inspiration and favor a static intellectualism, but rather insists that the Word is always a dy-

namic, and in its "dynamics" convinces me that Christ as God-Man is my Redeemer, and in accepting Him as my Redeemer also creates faith in His Word, which is inerrantly presented to me in the written canon of the Old and New Testaments.

Secondly, the significance of the book lies in the fact that it is oriented in the recent Luther renaissance. It is the author's serious intention to acquaint American theology with the findings of the recent Luther studies. There is no doubt that the studies have added considerably to our understanding of the theology of Luther. However, it must be kept in mind that these studies deal primarily with the "young" Luther. To present Luther's real theology on the basis of his exegetical lectures from 1509-1518 does not present a complete picture. This is true especially if the doctrine of justification is based upon the "young" Luther. Adolf Hamel points out that Luther's doctrine of justification during the early period was almost identical with the "*sanative Rechtfertigung*" of Augustine, a progressive justification, in which justification and renewal are mingled, and which does not adequately present Luther's later views concerning the objective character of justification (*Der Junge Luther und Augustin*, Vol. I, 115 f.). Furthermore, the author subscribes to the theory advocated by many modern Luther students which holds that Luther's "original inclination was to correlate the written Word with the Old Testament and the spoken Word with the New" (p. 123). It is true that in some of his earlier sermons Luther makes statements which seem to indicate that he had little regard for the written New Testament and considered the oral proclamation as the distinctive medium of the Word and the Gospel. Such statements by Luther, however, must be read in their entire context and in view of Luther's antithesis to the Roman Catholic *opus operatum* theory. Again it is not an either/or, but both/and. One of the author's quotations from Luther to support the contention that the Reformer emphasized the oral proclamation almost to the exclusion of the written Word is misleading. Luther says: "*Dass man aber hat muessen Buecher schreiben, ist schon ein grosser Abbruch und ein Gebrechen des Geistes.*" The author translates, "But man's need to write books is a great injury, and it is a violation of the Spirit." According to the context Luther said, The New Testament had to be written because there was a lack of the Spirit, which resulted in the intrusion of errorists, and the protection of the flock required that the "sheep of Christ are led into the Scripture in order that the sheep might pasture themselves and be protected against the wolves, since their shepherds would not pasture nor protect them" (W. A., X, 627).

We regret that the author's zeal repeatedly prompts him to pour out the child with the bath water. For example, he states that "the doctrine of justification lost its dynamics by being removed from the realm of experience into the realm of purely conceptual analysis" (p. 58). Or, "Is not the deification of the Bible into something divinely inerrant a form of the docetic heresy, a denial of the human nature of the Word?" (p. 135). Or he speaks of the misfortune of the Reformation "that its great, living truths received their systematic formulation in an age when the basic thought-forms were supplied by a decadent Aristotelian scholasticism" and "the new wine of the re-discovered Gospel was poured

into the old skins of static intellectualism" (p. 36). Again, he says that American Lutheran theology "is still largely orientated in the seventeenth century and, adhering to the traditional scholastic methods, continues to busy itself with old distinctions and abstractions" (p. 37).

We wish to apply Goethe's words not only to Luther but to all the great Lutheran teachers:

Was du ererbt von deinen Vaetern hast,
Erwirb es, um es zu besitzen.

F. E. MAYER

The Work of the Holy Spirit. By Abraham Kuyper. Translated by Rev. H. De Vries. Reprinted by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 664 pages, 9×6. \$5.00.

The reviewer cordially recommends this well-known treatise on the work of the Holy Spirit, published by the renowned statesman and theologian Dr. Abraham Kuyper, in three parts, from 1888 to 1889, under the title *Het werk van den Heiligen Geest*, in serial form in his religious weekly *Heraut* ("The Herald") chiefly for lay readers, whom he wished to indoctrinate in orthodox Reformed theology against certain deviating trends in modern and ancient times. Influential in politics, Dr. Kuyper held various high offices in Holland and became prime minister in 1901 at the age of 64 years. In 1880 he founded at Amsterdam the Free University, where he lectured on various topics, but worked mainly in the field of systematic theology. A strict Calvinist, he founded the Reformed Free Church in 1886. Since 1872 he edited the *Standaard*, a daily newspaper, and since 1878 the *Heraut*, a politico-religious weekly. In 1898 he was the L. P. Stone lecturer at Princeton Theological Seminary. Dr. Kuyper was the author of numerous political and theological works, noted both for depth and profundity, among them, in the field of apologetics: *Het modernisme, een Fata Morgana op christelijk gebied* ("Modernism, a Mirage in the Field of Christianity"), which appeared in 1871. In his widely read work *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, which in its English translation was first published in 1900 by Funk and Wagnalls Co., Dr. Kuyper purposes to present to his readers the entire work of the Holy Spirit in the realms of nature and grace. In Part (Volume) I of the work he represents the work of the Holy Spirit from Creation to the incarnation and redemption of Christ and the founding of the Christian Church. In Part (Volume) II he shows how the sinner is converted by the Holy Ghost from his natural state of sin and wrath to faith in Christ (original sin, regeneration, calling and repentance, justification, faith). Part (Volume) III pictures in great detail the sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost, in particular the love which He creates and sustains in the hearts of believers. Very fittingly the author closes the discussion with the *locus* of Prayer as the Christian's manifestation of faith and love. Though the writer was a strict Calvinist and as such often deviates from the Lutheran doctrine, Lutheran readers will, nevertheless, peruse his work with profit even though at times they find themselves compelled to disagree with what he says. Very helpful are the "Subject Index" and the "Textual Index," as also the "Explanatory Notes to the American Edition," the "Preface of the Author," and the "Introductory Note" by Prof.

B. B. Warfield, all of which contain much to explain Dr. Kuyper's great work. May the book incite many to return with renewed interest to the study of the doctrine of the Holy Ghost and His work as set forth in Holy Scripture.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

Reinhold Niebuhr: Prophet from America. By D. R. Davies. The Macmillan Company, New York. 1948. 102 pages, 5×7½. \$2.00.

Reinhold Niebuhr is supremely "dialectical," and therefore many people find it extremely difficult to grasp his position, though he has been hailed on both sides of the Atlantic as one of the outstanding thinkers of our generation. Pastors who are familiar with Niebuhr's writings will appreciate Davies' analysis of Niebuhr's position. Pastors who do not have time or inclination to plow through the manifold writings of Niebuhr will gain a very fine overview of Niebuhr's position. The author, a member of the Anglican Church and author of *Down Peacock's Feathers*, presents a very sympathetic study of Niebuhr. In the first chapter he traces the "theological" development of Niebuhr from the Evangelical manse and Yale Divinity School to his parish in the industrial section of Detroit, where his social theories crystallized. In the second and the third chapter the author shows that politically Niebuhr is a social revolutionary and theologically neo-orthodox, i. e., he disavowed Modernism's false anthropological optimism. Niebuhr is, of course, not primarily a theologian, but a social thinker. On the one hand, he has challenged the premise that man is inherently good, and, on the other hand, he seeks a solution for the tension of our entire social structure by dialectics. As a neo-orthodox he has remained an adherent of the liberal tradition, as is evident particularly from his description of the Kingdom of God. Davies brings sufficient material from the Gifford lectures (*The Nature and Destiny of Man*) to show that according to Niebuhr the eschatological concepts in the New Testament are to be understood symbolically. In the final analysis Niebuhr's theology remains a this-worldly religion.

There are a few minor errors, such as that Niebuhr was reared in Lutheranism, that he was born in Germany, whereas he was a member of the former Evangelical Synod and was born at Wright City, Mo. No reference is made to the fact that he graduated from Eden Theological Seminary in 1913. (He was on Eden's debating team in 1913, which met the Concordia Seminary team.)

F. E. MAYER

Let God Be God! An Interpretation of the Theology of Martin Luther. By Philip S. Watson. Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia. 203 pages, 8½×6. \$3.00.

The Muhlenberg Press deserves great praise for having published this new and instructive interpretation of Luther's theology by P. S. Watson, tutor in systematic theology and philosophy of religion, Handsworth College, Birmingham, England, a Methodist, who manifestly has made a careful study not only of Luther's works, but also of such eminent Luther students as Karl Holl and the various representatives of the Swedish Lundensian school. His chief interest lies in refuting the false views which men like

Adolf Harnack, Ernst Troeltsch, and others have spread about Luther and in showing what Luther really taught. His emphasis on God's sovereignty, indicated by the title of the book, which he believes to have been Luther's central theological thought, appears misplaced. Over against sinful man and his claim to merit, Luther indeed stressed God's sovereignty, especially in his outstanding work *De Servo Arbitrio*. But to Luther this emphasis on God's sovereignty was primarily Law preaching, which proud, rebellious man must know before he can be made to listen to the Gospel, the central message of the Bible. Luther's *Soli Deo Gloria* is due to God above all in view of Calvary's great redemption. Often, too, the writer speaks in terms of misleading obscurity, as, for example, when he says that "justification means for Luther the way in which God's will is done and His purposes of love are realized for and in and through many" (p. 64); or, when he avers that according to Luther "faith describes the human aspect of a relationship between man and God, where God is the all-determining factor" (*ibid.*). It is clear also that what Professor Watson says of Luther's "doctrine of the Word" is inadequate, if not downright wrong. He admits that "Luther at times equates the written words of the Bible with the Word of God himself," but then tries to show that "to Luther the Word of God is always fundamentally Christ even when he does not explicitly say so" (p. 152). In his *Christliche Dogmatik* Dr. Pieper demonstrates almost *ad nauseam* how wrong this view of modern liberal theologians is. So the book requires careful, judicious reading. But in the main the author shows a fine insight into Luther's theology and proves that he has well grasped its fundamentals, as, for example, Luther's conception of Law and Gospel, sin and grace, man's helplessness and God's free salvation through faith in Christ. Very true also is the writer's claim that "Luther came to denounce the Pope as Antichrist because of the doctrine of merit which the Papacy emphasizes" (p. 96). He is right, too, when he demonstrates that Luther did not regard the strict letter of the Decalog as binding for Christians (p. 111). His refutations of the misrepresentations of Harnack and Troeltsch are very convincing. The five chapters in the book bear the following titles: "Luther as a Theologian"; "The Motif of Luther's Thought"; "The Revelation of God"; "The Theology of the Cross"; "The Doctrine of the Word." The whole discussion is well documented, and the translations of Luther are accurate and excellent. May the book induce many to a new and thorough study of Luther's theology.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

The Seven Ways of Sorrow. By Alvin E. Wagner and W. G. Polack. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 1948. 115 pages, 8x5¼. \$1.50, net.

This book of Lenten sermons offers two series. The first, of seven sermons, is prepared by the Rev. Alvin E. Wagner of North Hollywood, Calif., formerly of Forest Park, Ill., and Panama. They are a treatment of the Via Dolorosa. Pastor Wagner handles a crisp and direct style. He arrives at a clean and emphatic doctrinal content. Some of the links between the scenes of the Passion and the application to the hearer are unexpected and should be stimulating to the preacher who is seeking to revive the bearing

of the age-old story upon his own imagination and faith. Instances are the parallel between the mansion of Caiaphas and the Last Judgment; Christ an unwanted prisoner and an unwanted Savior; the arrival at Golgotha and our arrival in eternity. The author is skillful in setting forth sharp concepts and in arriving at genuine climaxes of mood. — The second series comprises eight brief meditations on great Lenten hymns and is contributed by Dr. W. G. Polack, professor of church history and hymnology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo. Texts are provided for each sermon, in addition to the hymn. The hymns are: "A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth"; "Rock of Ages"; "There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood"; "Upon the Cross Extended"; "Just as I Am, Without One Plea"; "In the Cross of Christ I Glory"; "Soul, Adorn Thyself with Gladness"; and "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded." The author is careful to stress the doctrinal values. He utilizes a minimum of the historical background or association of the hymn.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

When Thy Face I See. By Armin C. Oldsen. Ernst Kaufmann, Inc., New York. 8×5½, 131 pages. \$2.25.

Pastor Oldsen developed these sermons for his congregation at Valparaiso, Ind., and dedicates the book to the "members and student-members" of that church. His method is to ponder aspects of the Savior's character and purpose, particularly in the Passion, by thinking of Him visually. He refers to specific works of art to make his point, but does not suspend his remarks from specific paintings. The method is freshly handled, and the doctrines of redemption and regeneration stand forth adequately.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

A Child's Garden of Prayer. Compiled and Adapted by H. W. Gockel and E. J. Saleska. Illustrated by Otto Keisker. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 1948. 6¾×8¼, 40 pages. \$2.00.

The theology of the prayers in this booklet is not of the profundity that would seem to warrant a review in a professional journal. Nevertheless it is significant enough to have mention here. The booklet combines a choice of prayers covering the chief interests and activities of children, including churchgoing, Christian charity, and simple reverence to God. The setting of these prayers is an unusually glowing layout of a variety of art forms which should make the book a primary and major religious experience for thousands of children. It will do for our children what some of the rich productions of German art did for those of three generations ago.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

The Secret of Suffering. By Rolf L. Veenstra. W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Mich. 5¼×7½, 138 pages. \$2.00.

On the whole we concur with the author in his presentation of his subject, but we are obliged to differ with him in several respects. Christ's descent into hell cannot be considered a part of His suffering, and some of the author's speculations about everlasting life as found in chapter six are untenable. Nor do we feel

that he actually holds that "all men believe in God," but that he merely meant to say that there are no actual atheists in this world, which is also debatable. In the main this is a very acceptable and Scriptural discussion of the problem of suffering. O. E. SOHN

Epistle to White Christians. By Fred D. Wentzel. The Christian Education Press, 1505 Race St., Philadelphia, Pa. 96 pages, 5×7½. \$1.50.

Here is a highly emotional, all-out appeal for settlement of the race problems by total amalgamation, including intermarriage, and which presents the case in a ringing and challenging fashion that seems to have much in its favor. Yet when one, for instance, recalls the article on the "Church and Caste" by the sainted missionary A. J. Lutz (C. T. M., 1948, 679 f.), in which the author relates the experiences of our missionaries in India in trying to work out a solution of a similar problem, one is not so sure that the author has the answer, plausible though the argumentation seems to be. Christian love still has to find the way.

O. E. SOHN

In Training. A Guide to the Preparation of the Missionary. By Rowland Hogben. Edited by the Rev. A. T. Houghton, M. A. Published by The Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship. 64 East Lake Street, Chicago. 188 pages, 5⅛×7⅛. \$2.25.

Rowland Hogben served many years as a missionary and then devoted his life to training others for overseas mission service. He met his death in an accident on the Burma Road while taking a number of new recruits into China in 1942. He planned this book and wrote some of the chapters. Mr. Houghton and other contributors then completed the book according to the original design. It shows the Scriptural reasons for entering a mission career and then also how the missionary candidate should prepare for this calling. They should study history of missions so that "mistakes of the past need not be repeated," they should study comparative religions so that they may the better show that "Christ, with the faith that centers in Him, stands alone and unique." The book rings true to the Scriptures and will be found very useful for all students of methods in mission work, not only for foreign fields, but also for home fields. E. C. ZIMMERMANN

BOOKS RECEIVED

From Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.:

Portals of Prayer No. 89. — **He Loved Even Me.** Daily Devotions from Feb. 24 to April 16, 1949. By Rev. Carl W. Berner. 10 cents each, postpaid.

Andachtsbuechlein No. 89. — **Sonntagsklaenge No. 3.** Vom 24. Februar bis zum 17. April. — By Dr. H. M. Zorn. 10 cents each, postpaid.

From Fleming H. Revell Company, N. Y.:

How to Live Effectively. By J. Richard Sneed, D. D. 5¼×7½, 112 pages. \$1.50.